The Church of St. Leo the Great

Celebrating 120 Years of History and Heritage

1881 - 2001

Church of St. Leo the Great Press
Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.
2001

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the loyal parishioners and friends who have given their time and generosity to help sustain Saint Leo's for the past 120 years.

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HONOREE ANN D'ADAMO

Anna (Don't call me Annie; please call me Ann) Giorgilli D'Adamo, one of tonight's honorees, was born and raised in Little Italy. She likes to say that she was born at 211 S. High Street, now part of the Da Mimmo Restaurant complex. Long before her father bought the house, it also was Baltimore's first brewery.

Marriage at St. Leo's in 1949 and raising three children (Joe, Jr., and twins Debbie and Denise) more or less took her out of the neighborhood, although she still frequently visited her parents and other relatives.

Ann was very active in the affairs involving her children's schools: Shrine of the Little Flower Elementary, Archbishop Curley High School and Catholic High School, where she sometimes substituted for the nurse (her life-long ambition) and librarian. Joining the Little Italy Lodge, Order Sons of Italy in America, in 1986 brought her back to the area of her birth in a very big way. She not only became active as a Lodge officer but rejoined St. Leo's as well.

Mrs. D'Adamo has been called the St. Leo Personnel Director, since she is the one who coordinates the volunteer workers for all of the church's activities, principally the two pasta dinners, the St. Anthony and St. Gabriel Festivals. Her job becomes more difficult each year as age takes its toll on the volunteer group, which numbers about 200, many of whom are non-parishioners. Somehow, she manages, moving people around as if the festival grounds were a huge chessboard. When need be, she'll simply take over a stand herself. Or, maybe have one of her nine grandchildren fill in.

Ann manages to balance this arduous task with her duties as an officer of the Lodge, currently holding the position of Financial Secretary. In that post, she keeps the rolls of 700 members. She started the Lodge's successful monthly Bingo and serves as an "advisor" to her husband of 52 years, Joe, Sr., who currently is president. Ann is a master with names and people's idiosyncrasies. Need someone to handle tickets for an affair; she's your "go-to person." She knows where someone likes to sit, or—more importantly—with whom.

"Sometimes, I feel that I spend more time in Little Italy now than before I got married," says the Perry Hall resident, adding "We never should have sold the house on High Street." An extremely shy person, she abhors speaking in public and is truly humbled by the honor of being recognized at the 120th Anniversary Gala.

HONOREE LUCY POMPA

She was born November 7, 1918 to Nicholas and Rose Palmere, who had emigrated from Foggia, Italy in the early 1900's. Her parents were married at St. Leo's Church and settled in the Little Italy Community. She was the fifth of nine children, and her parents taught her the importance of helping others willingly. When she was at the age of ten, her family moved to a larger home on White Avenue, since her father had expanded his construction business in the Harford Road area. Along with the move and the rearing of nine children, Lucy's mother became very ill and died. Lucy, being the oldest of the two daughters, took on the responsibility of tending to the needs of her father and younger siblings until their adulthood. This left her with little time for herself, but that never seemed to bother Lucy.

At twenty-one, she became employed at the Pennsylvania Railroad Station on President St. It was here that she met her husband, Vincent Pompa, whom she married on May 2, 1948. They lived and raised their three children: Dominic, Roseanna, and Vincent, Jr., in the home of Vince's parents at 216 S. Exeter St., where she still resides. Lucy and Vince always played an active part in their church and community. While Lucy enrolled in the St.Leo's Mother's Club and the Sodality, Vince became involved in the Holy Name Society and the St. Leo's Choir. They both became members of the St.Gabriel Society, of which, her father-in-law, Dominic Pompa, had been one of the Original founders. Lucy and Vince worked side-by-side in all of the church and community fund raisers such as carnivals, festivals, (Lucy' s famous "fried dough" stand, bingos, and the Spaghetti/Ravioli dinners which won her the title of "Queen of the Raviolis." Lucy also worked as a teacher's aide at St. Leo's and at St. Patrick's schools and did home tutoring, but her favorite of all, was working at the Feast of St .Lucy (her namesake), which was celebrated on December 13, and which she continued on after the death of Lucy Tomaso in 1983. Last year, the attendance exceeded 250 people.

She and her husband were also charter members of the Little Italy Lodge #2286. Through all of their forty-nine years of married life, they were noted for their constant and devoted service to the church and Community until Vince died in 1997. After his death, Lucy assumed his title as President of the St. Gabriel Congregation and also became an active member in the two newly formed societies: St. Vincent Palotti, and the St. Anthony Society.

Everyone who knows Lucy, knows that she will literally give you "the shirt off your back" if you need it. The precious qualities her parents instilled in her as a child have manifested themselves throughout her life. Now at age 82, she continues her endeavors with the help of her children, four grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and a long line of relatives who love her dearly and call her the "Matriarch of the Family".

Lucy says that as long as The Lord is willing, she will continue to do whatever she can for the church, lodge, and community. Whatever the task, or whenever she's asked, Lucy responds "I'm there if you need me."

CHAIRPERSON NANCY AZZARO

Nancy & Anthony Azzaro

Nancy Azzaro is the daughter of an Italian merchant, Tony Jeppi, whose family owned stalls in Lexington Market until the 1980's. They operated a stall known as Joseph Jeppi & Sons. Her grandfather from Cefalu, Sicily was known as the Original Joe of Horseradish and Coconut.

Nancy was born and raised in an Italian neighborhood and was married to Anthony J. Azzaro forty-three years ago at our Lady of Pompei church. Family is extremely important to her, as is her Italian-American heritage.

As a young woman, she was involved for years with the Miastra Pia Filipino nuns at our Lady of Pompei, helping the sick, going to St. Leo's Orphanage and Home for the Elderly, volunteering, and taking care of the underprivileged.

She and her husband raised their two children in Severna Park. In 1984, they moved back to her husband's family home of 105 years in Little Italy. During her married life, Nancy was in the hair dressing business for 33 years during which time she owned and operated three beauty salons while serving in 1970 as president of a residents' association in Severna Park. Nancy has been a member of the Little Italy Lodge for the past 19 years, where she has served in several capacities, the last being president for four years.

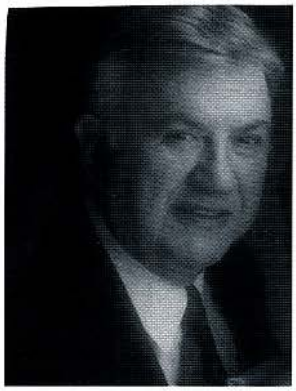
While President of the Little Italy Community Organization (LICO), she won the "Baltimore's Best" award from Mayor William Donald Schaefer for the Little Italy Community, and she was responsible for establishing the "bocce courts" and playground dedicated to the late Tommy D'Alesandro, and for having the adjacent property transferred from the community to the Little Italy Lodge, since the neighborhood itself was not interested in developing that particular property on Pratt Street

Nancy has been chairperson of the St. Anthony's Festival held in June, and also the St. Gabriel's Festival in August. She has chaired the Columbus Gala for the Grand Lodge, as has participated in the wreath-laying ceremony in Columbus Piazza. She has twice won first prize for the float entered by the Little Italy Lodge.

She has been responsible for the Ballo di Primavera sponsored by the Little Italy Lodge to honor outstanding Italian-Americans with the Thomas J. D'Alesandro, Jr. Good Citizen Award.

Besides her interest in the Lodge, she is now sharing her energy with Fr. Mike and St. Leo's Church.

CHAIRPERSON MICHAEL F. DILIELLO, SR



Michael F. DiLiello, Sr. was born August 23, 1922 in Baltimore's Little Italy. He married Rita d'Apice in 1944. They have three children, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Mike served in the U.S. Infantry with distinction in WWII, and saw action in the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium for which he received numerous commendations.

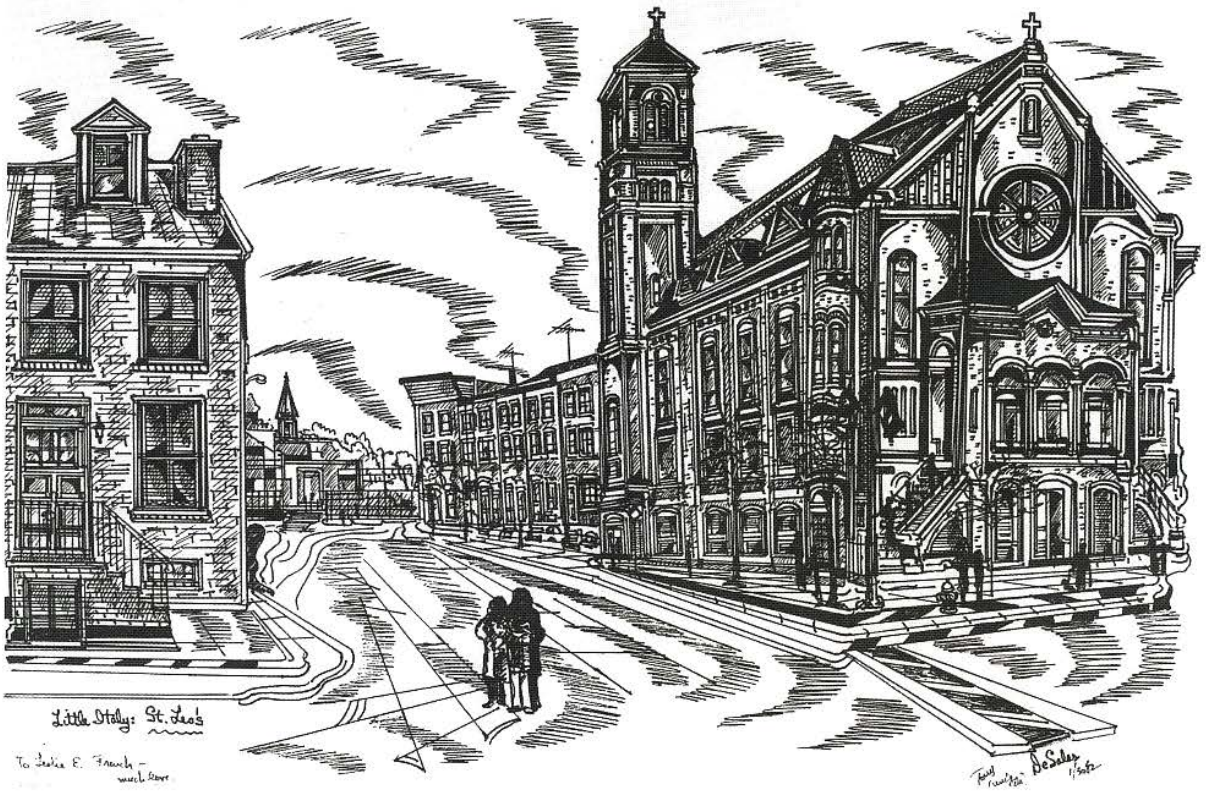
In 1949, he opened the Michael F. DiLiello Insurance Agency, and later the Central Acceptance Company and Insurance Premium Finance Company, all located in Little Italy.

Mike has been involved in many community and charitable organizations, but the one closest to his heart is St. Leo's and the priests. His favorite pastime is spending quality time with his family, especially his great-grandchildren.

In the last twenty-five years, Mike has raised more than $200,000 for United Cerebral Palsy in Maryland. He has received numerous awards, commendations, and recognition for his many charities and good works. He was the founder of the Michael Bugher Fund for the first heart and lung transplant operation at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

His charities and good heart go beyond the call of any one person. He received the Thomas D'Alesandro Award from the Little Italy Lodge. He is now is enjoying semi-retirement, but still is keeping himself busy doing good works for anyone who comes in contact with him.

Letters to Saint Leo the Great Church



Stiles & Exeter Street

SAINT LEO THE GREAT, ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

227 South Exeter Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Phone: 410.675.7275 • Fax: 410.675.8291

est. 1881

Parish Councel

Fr. Michael Salerno, S.A.C.
Pastor

John Guerriero
President

Bob Meier
Vice President

Ida Esposito
Secretary

Ralph Castello
Guy Matricciani
Trustees

Ray Cossentino
Jessie Granese
Steve Kennedy
Victor Lancelotta
Joe Lavezza
Christopher Mazzulli
Sam Miller
Lucy Pompa

October 28, 2001

Dear Parishioners and Friends of Saint Leo's,

On this 120th Anniversary of The Founding Of Saint Leo's Church, we thank God, and we honor our founder in Heaven, Father Joseph Leo Andreis. We remember with dignity, all the families, businesses, and benefactors who took their places in society to put Saint Leo's name on the map.

Today, we remember our Italian heritage and all generations of friends of other religions and nationalities. We give thanks to the Archdiocese of Baltimore under Cardinal Keeler's leadership, the Pallottine Fathers and Brothers, who have been here about 90 years, and I give thanks to my mother and father, Ralph and Antoinette Salerno, for the dedication and sacrifices that helped me get to the Altar of God as a priest.

Lastly, I salute this great country of ours, where religion has a free place for all those who choose to worship. In you, the family of Saint Leo's, whom I've come to love and be loved, I am proud to be part of this milestone in the history of this Parish and this new Millennium.

I remain.

Sincerely,

Fr. Mike

Rev. Michael Louis Salerno, S.A.C.

Pastor

PALLOTTINE FATHERS

Cardinal Keeler

OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE
320 Cathedral Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201 • 410-547-5437 • FAX: 410-727-8234

October 28, 2001

The Parish Community of St. Leo

Dear Friends,

I am happy to send congratulations and prayerful wishes on the 120th anniversary of your parish.

From its very beginning when Mass was celebrated by your founding pastor, Father Joseph L. Andreis, St. Leo's has faithfully proclaimed the gospel and ministered to the spiritual needs of the Italian community.

Along with your present pastor, Father Michael Salerno, and the parish staff, you deserve to be congratulated on your own commitment to St. Leo's. Through the participation of so many in parish organizations and activities, religious education and outreach to those in need, the gospel of Christ has been faithfully proclaimed and served for 120 years.

May the Lord bless all who participate in this significant celebration, with good memories of the past and renewed strength for the future, as St. Leo's parishioners continue to grow in ways of faith and hope and love.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+William H. Keeler

Archbishop of Baltimore

Auxillery Bishop Bennett

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

AUXILIARY BISHOP OF BALTIMORE
OFFICE OF THE URBAN VICAR

April 9, 2001

Rev. Michael Salerno, S.A.C. and
Parishioners
St. Leo's Roman Catholic Church
227 S. Exeter Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

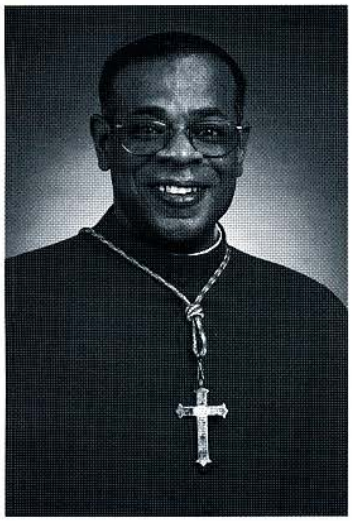
Dear Fr. Salerno and Parishioners:

I rejoice with you on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the founding of St. Leo's Church and its long and wonderful service to the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Your patron, Pope St. Leo the Great, is most noted for his defense of the Church against the invasion of barbarian warriors who were bent upon destroying it.

In imitation of him, then, your faith community will be most true to itself if it continues to hold fast to the faith we have received and are obligated by our Baptism to hand on.

Congratulations and best wishes to each of you.



Very sincerely yours,

+Gordon D. Bennett, S.J.

Most Reverend Gordon D. Bennett, S.S.J.
Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore

320 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201-4421 / (410) 547-5452 / Fax: (410) 727-5432 / UVicar@archbalt.org

Very Reverend Frank Amato

THE LOVE OF CHRIST URGES US ON

Society of the Catholic Apostolate **Pallottines** *Immaculate Conception Province* *Office of the Provincial*

April 6, 2001

Dear Father Salerno:

On this happy occasion as you commemorate the 120th Anniversary of St. Leo's Church, may I offer my sincerest congratulations and prayerful best wishes to you and the entire parish who have helped in so many ways to make St. Leo's a beacon of faith for the Church in Baltimore.

Over the many years St. Leo's Church has been a most active and integral part of the community of Little Italy. It has been a source of great strength as well as an inspiration to all who have been associated with it.

With you, I thank Almighty God for His loving care and concern and for the many blessings he has bestowed upon the parish.

It is my sincere prayer that St. Leo's Church will continue for many years to have the same vital impact on the life and faith of the entire community that it has had in the past.

Sincerely in St. Vincent Pallotti,

Very Rev. Frank Amato, S.A.C.

Very Reverend Frank Amato, S.A.C.
Provincial Immaculate Conception Province

Reverend Michael Salerno, S.A.C.
Church of St. Leo the Great
227 South Exeter Street
Baltimore, M.D. 21202

St. Vincent Pallotti

William Donald Schaefer

COMPTROLLER of MARYLAND
Serving the People

William Donald Schaefer
Comptroller

To the Rev. Michael Salerno and the members of the Church of St. Leo the Great:

Congratulations to the Church of St. Leo the Great on 120 years of faith, of community involvement, of helping people. This church is the cornerstone of one of Baltimore's most vibrant and historic neighborhoods – Little Italy.

St. Leo's is also one of Baltimore's most famous and beautiful landmarks. But a church is more than a building. A church is people committed to God and to each other. I've been to St. Leo's more times than I can count for the Festival of St. Gabriel or the Festival of St. Anthony or other events, and I have always felt welcomed and impressed by your warmth and hospitality.

St. Leo's is growing tremendously, with people who've moved out of Little Italy coming back to this church and this neighborhood for services, festivals, weddings, and life's other wonderful events. The credit goes to Father Mike and all of you who are working so hard to energize St. Leo's and guide it to success in the new millennium.

Congratulations again and best wishes for another 120 years of service to God and to Little Italy!

Sincerely,

William Donald Schaefer

William Donald Schaefer
Comptroller of Maryland

80 Calvert Street • P. O. Box 466 • Annapolis, Maryland 21404-0466 • 410-260-7801 • 1-800-552-3941 (MD)
Fax: 410-974-3808 • MRS 711 (MD) or 1-800-735-2258 • TDD 410-260-7157 • wdschaefer@comp.state.md.us

Benjamin L. Cardin

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
3RD DISTRICT, MARYLAND

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DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS
STEERING COMMITTEE

ASSISTANT DEMOCRATIC WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–2003

October 28, 2001

Dear Friends,

I want to congratulate all my friends at St. Leo's Roman Catholic Church on 120 years of commitment and dedication to the Baltimore Italian-American community. St. Leo's is a historic landmark that represents what is best in our city.

St. Leo's roots go deep into Little Italy. For more than a century, St. Leo's has helped Italian immigrants become Americans. In the process, it has helped make Baltimore a vibrant, dynamic city. Its annual festival is a major event that attracts Baltimoreans from across the city. As St. Leo's enters the new millennium, its parishioners can look back to an illustrious past and forward to a bright future. I am honored to be invited to today's celebration, and I look forward to many more happy occasions.

Best wishes to all my friends on this very special day.

Sincerely,

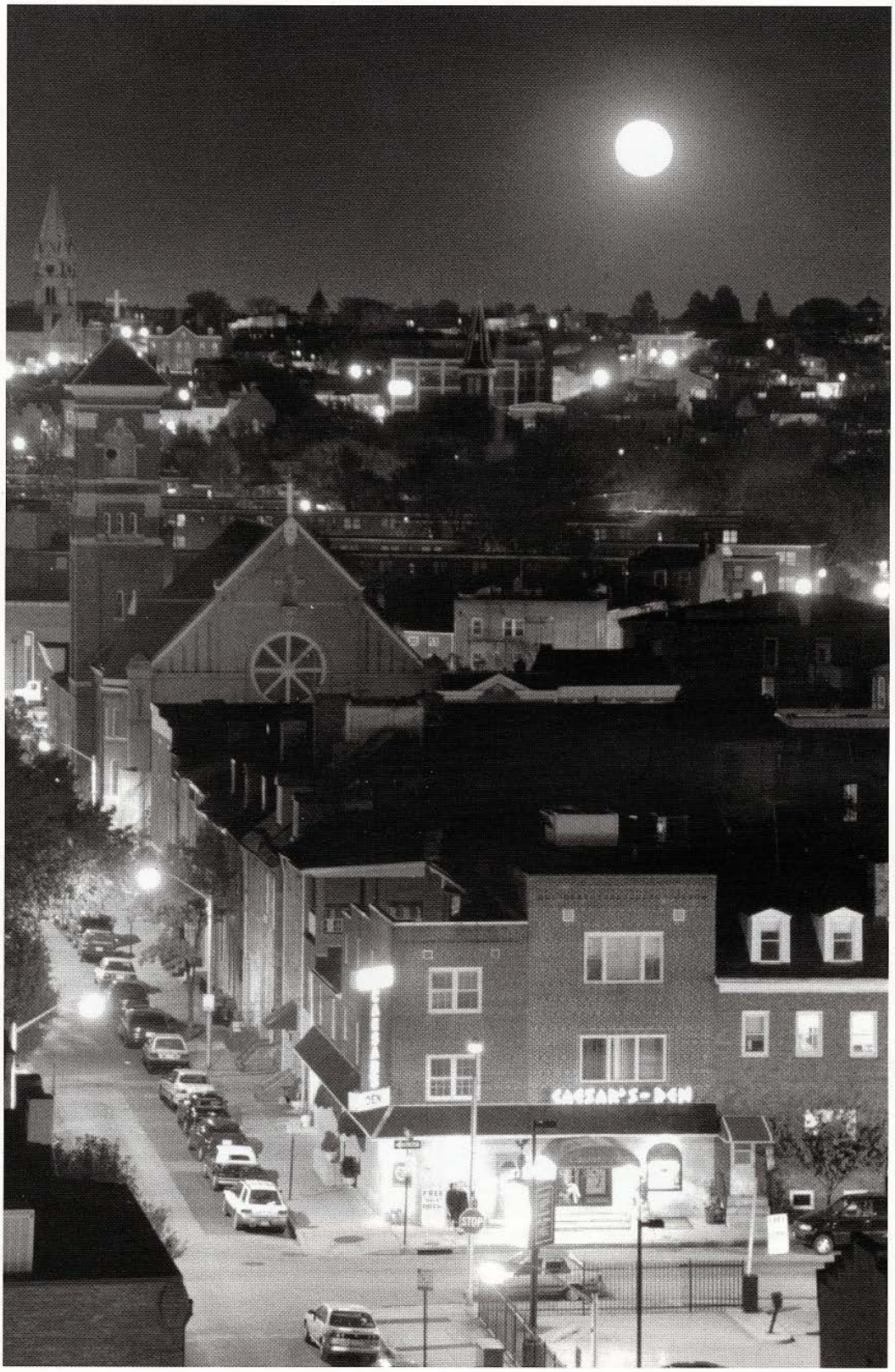
Ben

Benjamin L. Cardin
Member of Congress

REPLY TO: ☐ 2267 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–2003
(202) 225–4016
http://www.house.gov/cardin

☐ 600 WYNDHURST AVENUE, SUITE 230
BALTIMORE, MD 21210
(410) 433–8886

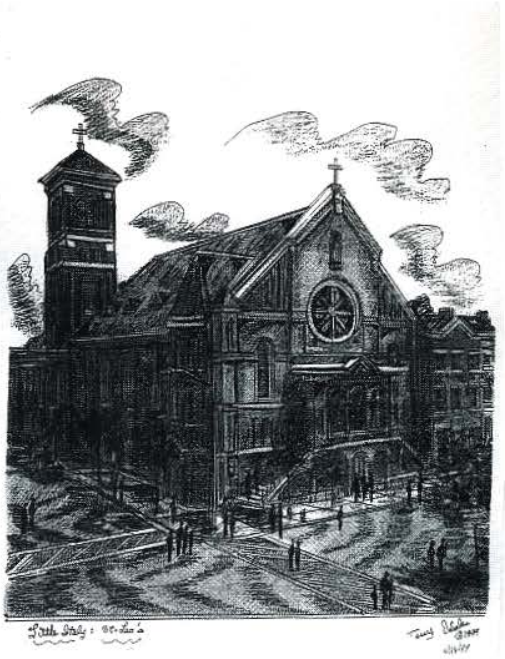
120 Anniversary Committee: Bottom Row: Mike Diliello, Anthony Azzaro Second Row: Ann D'Adamo, Caroline Chiapparelli Gramil, Nancy Azzaro Third Row: Joe D'Adamo, Ray Peluso, Christopher Mazzulli Top Row: Marian Arminger, Harry Connolly


CAESAR'S DEN

The History & the Makeup of St. Leo's Church

SAINT LEO'S HISTORY

Welcome...



It had its beginning on January 23, 1881, as the then- pastor, Rev. Joseph Leo Andreis, blessed the congregation with a monstrance sent by the reigning pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIII.

Today, at 120 years old and in the second millennium, St. Leo The Great Church, located in the area affectionately known as "Little Italy," still is youthful and vibrant with a growing number of parishioners, organizations and activities.

In recent years, cosmetic changes, such as the installation of a bronze statue of our patron in the outdoor alcove, have been made to the church, listed as a national historic shrine. In addition, the refurbished school, which closed in 1980 after 98 continuous years, now *is* a thriving Adult Learning Center, named often a former pastor, the late Rev. Oreste Pandola, SAC.

At a time when many churches are having difficulties maintaining membership, St. Leo's has seen a dramatic increase in attendance, thanks in no small part to its current pastor, Rev. Michael Salerno, SAC.

Annual affairs, such as the pasta dinners and festivals honoring St. Anthony and St. Gabriel continue to he successful and there now are four church organizations helping to spur the growth and strength of the "new" St. Leo's.

This millennium celebration is a tribute to the Pallotines, whose priests continue to staff St. Leo's, its parishioners and its many friends who have supported the church through attendance at functions. The people of St. Leo's look to the future with renewed vigor and hope to accomplish much in the years to come.

We thank all who have contributed to this affair either through purchase of tickets and/or advertising in this commemorative book. May God bless you, St. Leo's and all who worship there.

RESTORATIONS

St Leo's Roman Catholic Church was completed in 1881. Since that time there have been numerous restoration and upgrading programs. Listed below are some of the major ones:

1883:

An organ and pipes was put in place. Benches and carpeting were installed.

1963:

An air-conditioner was installed in the church.

1990:

It had been long apparent that an elevator was necessary out of concern for elderly and handicapped of the parish, many of whom were no longer able to attend Mass because they could not navigate the steps. Additionally, it was extremely difficult to carry the caskets in and out of church for funerals. In consideration of these facts, an elevator was finally installed.

1991:

The air-conditioner was overhauled.

1997:

The interior of the sanctuary and church were painted; new kneelers and new carpet were installed

1998:

Three niches were built to hold the statues of St. Leo, St. Anthony, and St. Gabriel. The organ and pipes were restored.

1999:

It became necessary to install a new air-conditioner in the church and eventually in the church hall. A new ceiling, new chairs and tables were purchased for the church hall.

2000:

A gold-painted statue of St.Leo was placed in the outside niche above the church steps. An air-conditioner was finally installed in the church hall.

2001:

The outside of the church was painted. Windows and brick limestone in the tower were replaced.

St.Leo's is eminently blessed. The dedication and leadership of our Parish Council and all the church societies, the parishioners' love and the generous benefactors, have made all the changes possible for the priests serving the Little Italy community.

CHURCH ORGANIST
ELIZABETH D'ADAMO BROCCOLINO

Elizabeth D'Adamo Broccolino spent a great deal of her life in a church, singing, directing a choir, or playing the organ. She learned to play the piano while in high school at the Institute of Notre Dame, where she had won medals every year for her academic prowess.

After graduation from IND in 1937, she learned that St. Leo's needed an organist, and though she had never received training in the instrument, a nun at St. Leo's- Sr. Mary Josephine, SSND- encouraged her to try for the position formerly held by Minnie Malloy. Elizabeth's "on-the-job" training from Sister Josephine succeeded, and she became the regular organist, a position she didn't relinquish until forty-nine years later.

In addition to playing the organ, Mrs. Broccolino directed the choir. She played at Masses, Novenas, Funerals, and special services. Frequently, she played and sang alone at funerals. Sometimes, on special occasions such as Christmas, her brother Phillip accompanied her on the violin. Often in later years, her daughter, Theresa, who was a professionally trained singer, joined her.

Her dedication to the position was best exemplified by the fact that, even after the l974 death of Robert, her husband of twenty-six years, she continued to play the organ, not only at St. Leo's, but also at St. John's (now the St. Jude Shrine), St. Elizabeth's, and Our Lady of Fatima, even though it meant traveling by bus and streetcar, frequently at night, and in bad weather.

USHERS

Ushers are our men of hospitality. They serve as doorkeepers, distributors of weekly church bulletins and Mass books, traffic directors, and collections organizers.

This service has been in effect since the church's inception in 1881 up to the present day. We have almost 20 ushers from different enterprises and professional backgrounds and ranging in age from 17 to 90 years.

They have been faithful, dedicated, and loyal. They continue to serve under the direction of Anthony Bruni, the Ushers President.

John Molino

THE CHOIR

By best recollection, in the 1920's and early 1930's, "Miss Minnie" was the choir organist. Sister Josephine, SSND, who taught at St. Leo's School, was the director of the adult and children's choirs. After Miss Minnie left, Elizabeth D'Adamo became organist. She provided this service for approximately 50 years.

Masses were 6, 8, 9, 10:15 and 11:30 on Sunday mornings, and 6:30 A.M. and 8:00 A.M. weekday mornings. Anna Cuneo and Tina Milio, who alternated each week, sang the 6:30 A.M. weekday Mass. The 8:00 A.M. weekday Mass was for the St. Leo School Children.

Mary Grace Kidwell

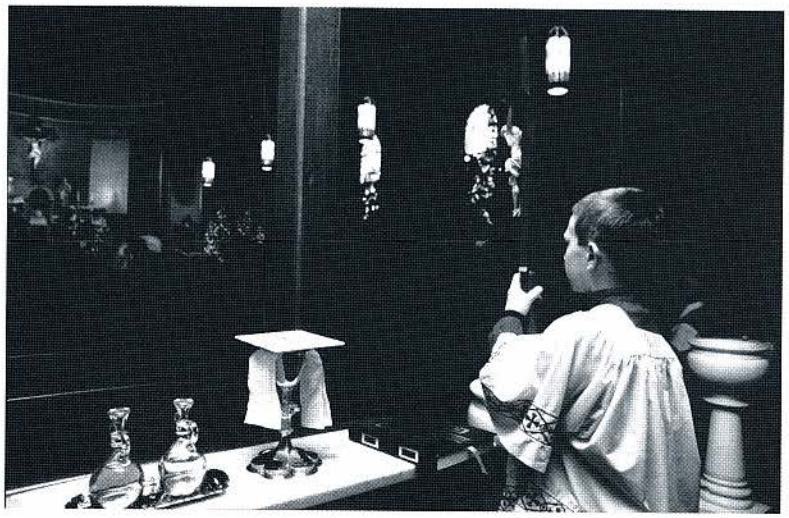
In the late 1930's and the 1940's, the children of the upper grades would sing the funeral Masses. At the 10:15 Sunday Mass, the "Big Choir," as we called it, consisted of high school and working girls from the neighborhood. Sister Ernestine, SSND, who also taught at St. Leo's, then became Director. Choir practice was held every Friday evening from 7 P.M. to 9 P.M. in the School.

The choir at that time had about 20-25 members. Concetta "Phoebe" Candido, our soloist, was always asked to sing the "Ave Maria" at weddings, usually held at the 10:15 A.M. Mass. Our choir now has fifteen members and the organist is Mrs. Lolli Hart. Our choir is proud and honored to be a part of the 120th Anniversary Celebration of St. Leos.

ALTAR SERVERS

Altar service has been in existence since 1888 and continues today. Many of our former servers, now in their 70's and 80's, recall the "good old days" serving at the 6:00 A.M. masses in the cold or extreme heat in the days when the priest faced the altar, and the Mass was said in Latin.

Today, we continue that rich tradition with both boy and girl altar servers under the leadership of Zachary Korpisz, President and Amanda Slonaka, Vice-President.



Zachary Korpisz

STATUE of ST. LEO

Dedicated January 13, 2000

For as long as some parishioners can remember, the niche above the main entrance of St. Leo's Roman Catholic Church at Stiles and Exeter Streets in Little Italy had been empty. Whether it ever was occupied is subject to conjecture. It is assumed that it was built to house a statue of the church's patron, Saint Leo I, also known as Saint Leo The Great.

One theory holds that a statue placed in the niche some time after the church was dedicated in 1881 was destroyed by lightning. A decision was made to put Saint Leo in his rightful place.

With Urban Bishop Gordon Bennett, S.J. officiating, and in the presence of hundreds of parishioners- past and present- a 450-pound bronze statue of the heroic saint was officially dedicated at noon on Thursday January 13, 2000. Victor and Pat Lancelotta, members of a large family that had long been active in the affairs of St. Leo's, had donated the statue.

Inside the church, a huge mural of St. Leo entitled "St. Leo in Glory," has had prominence above the main altar since 1954. On Sunday March 26, a shrine similar to one honoring Saints Gabriel and Anthony, was dedicated at the 9 30 A.M. Mass.

In conjunction with the dedication of the new shrine, an indoor Italian Bazaar was held in the school hall. This affair featured many of the foods and games usually found at the church's two outdoor summer festivals.

Leo I was pope from 440 AD to 461 AD. He established the primacy of the Bishop of Rome over all the bishops. His intervention in 452 AD with Attila the Hun, known as "The Scourge of God," and in 455 AD with Genseric, king of a marauding group known as The Vandals, saved Rome from destruction. In his march on Rome, Attila had devastated Aquilegia, Milan, Padua, and other cities. Pope Leo met with Attila prior to the Hun's entrance into Rome and he is said to have subdued the barbarian king by the majesty of his presence.

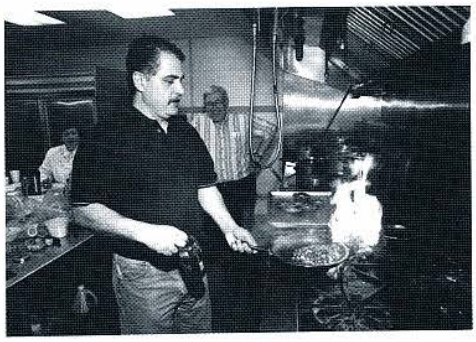
ADULT LEARNING CENTER

Recycling is currently very popular. Everything is being recycled from old newspapers to plastic jugs. Even people are being retooled, with new bones and joints. But schools?

Six years ago, at a time when parishes in Southeast Baltimore were concerned about closing their schools, St. Leo's, an historic Catholic church, re-opened its elementary school. The school closed in 1960, because the Schools Sisters of Notre Dame and later, the Pallotine Order no longer found it feasible to staff a school with a dwindling enrollment.

Has the area suddenly seen an Influx of young families with youngsters anxious for a sound education? Not really, although more young families have been moving into the community and there will be more in the future with the development of the inner Harbor East.

The late Rev. Oreste Pandola, SAC, the then pastor of St. Leo's, envisioned the re-opening of the school as an adult learning center,



one patterned after the successful programs in the surrounding counties. He saw a school, recently renovated, being used solely for a few pasta dinners and two festivals. He also saw aging parishioners with time on their hands.

He agreed with those who say, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." He also saw the success of a single adult class in the Italian language that had been held at the school. That interest would provide the spark.

Father Pandola sought the counsel and advice of two parishioners: Joe D'Adamo, a retired newspaper editor, and Rosalie Ranieri, a long-time teacher in the Baltimore County School System. The first order of business was to ascertain if there was a broad interest in the community and, secondly, what sort of subjects would interest the parishioners, many of them senior citizens.

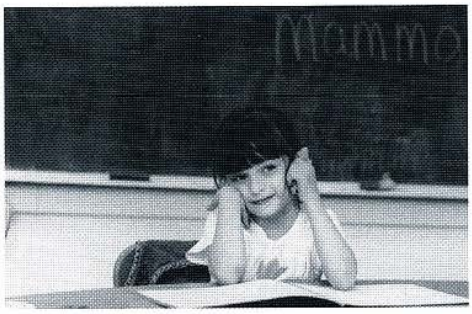
The school also would draw upon the members of the Little Italy Lodge, Order Sons of Italy, which at the time had a membership of more than 400, and it

was decided not to limit enrollment to parishioners.

A survey was distributed to ascertain where the interest would lie. It wasn't long before it was ascertained that there was considerable interest, and the task of drawing up a curriculum and locating qualified teachers followed. Surprisingly, this survey revealed that there was a lot of talent in St. Leo's own backyard- professional photographers, amateur artists, cooks, bakers, experienced language teachers, Shakespeare scholars, etc.

With little fanfare, the school opened and it has grown steadily in the five years since. The curriculum has included several levels of classes in the Italian language, a course on the Italian influence on Shakespeare, writing a will, understanding insurance, Italian card-playing, bocce, oil painting, photography, medical problems, wine-making, cake-decorating, bread baking, cookie-making, and Italian cooking.

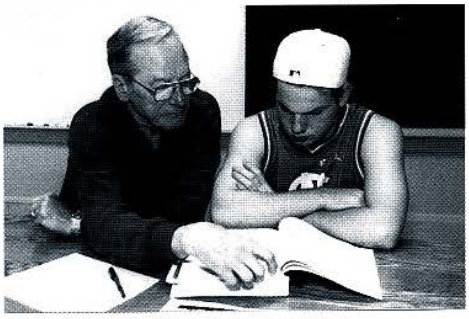
Four years ago, a course called "Great Chefs of Little Italy," featured different chefs from area restaurants demonstrating culinary skills each week. Participants included chefs from DaMimmo's, Luigi Petti's, Velleggia's, Boccaccio's, and Chiapparelli's.



Many of the teachers work without pay and the course costs are now $6 per session; just enough to pay expenses. Courses generally run six to eight weeks. Semesters are in the spring and the fall.

The spring semester starts in February; the fall in October. There were about 250 individuals enrolled in classes this year, including youngsters who were learning Italian on Saturday afternoons. Other classes are held on Mondays and Thursdays. After each semester, commencement exercises are held.

The program has not been without its low points. The major setback was in January 1996 when Father Pandora died suddenly. His death came between semesters, but the organizers were determined that the school should continue and be named the Oreste Pandola Adult Center. They met with Father Pandola's provincial, Reverend Peter Sticco, SAC, who assured them the school had his support. Father Pandola's successor, Reverend Michael Salerno, SAC, also has been very enthusiastic about the program.



Fr. Salerno appointed Mrs. Ranieri as Principal of the school, and Joe D'Adamo its Activity Director. Without Mrs. Ranieri's efforts, particularly after Fr. Pandola's death, there is no question the school would close for a second time. Mrs. Ranieri is very pleased with the success so far and is looking forward to even greater

accomplishments in the future. There are eight class rooms and an auditorium in the school building, and she won't be satisfied until every one is filled several nights a week.

Under Father Mike, the school building has been completely renovated. As part of the school program, he conducts a well-attended Bible study class, and on his recommendation, a once-a-week senior day was started under the direction of sister Mary Catherine Doer.

On Tuesday afternoons, many of the seniors- and oftentimes younger- spend a few hours at the school playing Bingo, making crafts, and having lunch together.

— Joe D'Adamo

Joe D' Adamo (Director) and Rosalie Ranieri (Principal)

Rev. Oreste Pandola, SAC,

Societies That Lend a Helping Hand

St. ANTHONY SOCIETY

Back Row: Fred Petrella, John Guerriero, Joe & Leo Lavessa, Tom Cardegna, Jerry Elliott, Tom Iacaboni
Front Row: Lucy Plowden, Ralph Castello, Ann Rinaldi

The news stories tell us that Sunday February 7, 1904, was a brutally cold and windy day. In Baltimore, a single spark was destined to change the face of the city forever. That spark ignited a blaze in the warehouse of the John E. Hurst Company at German (now Redwood) and Sharp Streets. Shortly after 11 AM, the building was engulfed in flames. By noon, the fire had spread to other nearby buildings, and the wind was driving it still further.

Fire companies from Washington, Pennsylvania and New York rushed to join the battle, but it was too late. The flames pounced and dove like hungry animals, devouring every building in their path. The entire downtown was an inferno. Toward evening, it was obvious that Little Italy was in danger. Residents began fleeing eastward toward Patterson Park, taking whatever belongings they could carry. It was then, most accounts agree, that the stage was set for a miracle. Many of the parishioners refused to leave their homes and belongings they had worked so hard to earn. Instead, they gathered on the east bank of the Jones Falls and prayed to God to spare them from the flames.

Someone in the crowd cried out, "St. Anthony, protect us!" and others took up the cry. A few of the men present rushed back to St Leo's and returned with the statue of St. Anthony and a vessel of holy water. As Fr. Monteverde raised his arms in prayer, they made a solemn vow: If

their homes and church were spared from the fire, they would hold a yearly festival in honor of St Anthony. At about 6 o'clock Monday morning, a strong wind came up and blew the flames the other way.

Efforts to clean up the downtown had not even begun when, in gratitude, the people of St Leo's founded the St Anthony Society and started to celebrate the Feast of St Anthony that same year; June 18, 1904. It was truly a great celebration which began with a solemn High Mass. Then, practically everyone who could walk, joined in the procession through the streets of Little Italy.

The parade was led by members of the St Anthony Society who carried a statue of the saint bedecked with ribbons. As the statue passed by, grateful parishioners pinned money to the ribbons, thanking St. Anthony for saving their neighborhood. With only brief interruptions during the two world wars and the mid-sixties, the festival has been held every year since.

Shortly after the Second World War, for some unknown reason, the members of the St. Anthony Society chose not to continue functioning as a Society. In early 1999, Father Michael Salerno called a meeting with descendants of the early members of the Society. The meeting was attended by approximately 20 descendants.

The question was asked at the meeting, "Is there was any interest in re-starting the St. Anthony Society?" All in attendance responded with a resounding "yes." Father Salerno appointed new officers and the date of the first meeting was determined to be Sunday, April 25th. 1999. Since its inception, the St. Anthony Society was noted both for its devotion to the Saint and to St. Leo's Parish. To this day, the members of the Society continue to assist the poor and homeless people, and to provide financial assistance to St. Leo's on special projects, when needed.

The Society also honors its Patron, St. Anthony on an annual basis. Some of the names of the founding members of the St. Anthony Society can still be found in the list of current members of the Society. The founding members were Joseph Petrella, Anthony Iannarelli, Gennaro Fulano, Michael Della Vecchia, Fred Petrella, Paul Castello. Vincent Del Pizzo, John Cossentino, Pio Marocco, Vincent Sugamosto, Michael Tirocchi, Joseph Cossentino, Albert Sciscone, Frank Sopino, Albert Taraddeo. Peter Silvestri, James Infussi, Joseph Bastianelli, and Rocco Di Pietro.

(From the Archives **of St. Leo's Church)**

ST. GABRIEL OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER

Lucy Pompa, Guy Mattriciani, Philomena Scalia, Elinor Stein, Agatha Mattriciani

The eleventh of thirteen children, the Saint was born to his parents Santo Possenti and Agnes Frisciotti in Assisi, Umbria on March 1, 1838 and was baptized in the Cathedral with the name of Francis. He lost his mother at age 4, and the family housekeeper, Pacifica, looked after him and the rest of the children. Francis received his first communion at age 7 and his confirmation at age 10.

His father, a brilliant lawyer, was appointed Governor of Urbania by Pope Gregory XIV and became a good friend of the Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII. He had to change his residence many times because of his office, but he always looked after the education and welfare of his children. Francis was educated by the Christian Brothers and by the Jesuits.

He was always the first of his class and received many honors and prizes in school. He loved dancing, opera, concerts, parties, hunting, and sports. His sister said that he was full of tricks and the terror of the household. His father thought that Francis was going to be a very successful lawyer like himself.

After various accidents (for instance, when he was almost killed with his own gun while hunting) and sicknesses, he finally decided at the age of 18 to join the Passionist Fathers.

His father, uncles, priests, and friends tried to dissuade him from taking such a step, but Francis was determined to go through with it. He was welcomed at the Monastery of Morrovalle (Macerata) and assigned to a narrow, simple, neat, poor room with a table, two chairs, a bed with straw mattress, a pillow, a crucifix, and three prints on the walls. What a difference from his comfortable, spacious rooms at his father's palace!

Upon receiving the habit of St. John of the Cross-, founder of the Passionist Fathers and Brothers on September 21, 1856 he changed his name from Francis to Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother. For his studies in Philosophy, he moved to the Monastery of Pievetorina (Macerata) and later for his Theology to the Monastery of Isle of Gran Sasso (the High Rock) Teramo. He was always an excellent student, kind, ever ready to help others, and never complaining. He taught catechism to the people of the Village, and visited the poor and the sick.

Due to unsettled local government regulations, the Archbishop of the diocese was unable to travel, so Gabriel's ordination to the priesthood was postponed. Meanwhile, he got very ill with tuberculosis, incurable at the time, and on February 27, 1862- not quite 24 years of age- he died.

Crowds of people, upon hearing of his death, came to pay homage and to pray to him. His first miracles occurred right there. He had set two goals in his life: to become a priest, and to become a saint. He did become a saint, but could not make it to the priesthood.

The fame of sanctity, the great devotion to him spread all over Abbruzzi and later throughout Italy. Continuous pilgrimages visited and venerated his remains, and he was held as a great friend of God.

On October 17, 1892 in the presence of Commissioners and Representatives of the people his remains were exhumed and placed in a double casket. His body was found completely intact.

He was beatified in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome by Pope Pius X in the presence of 50,000 people on May 18, I908 and was declared a Saint in the same Basilica on May 13, 1920 by Pope Benedict XV.

The Society of St. Gabriel was founded in Baltimore in the year 1928. Currently, there are about 240 members. Among the names of the founders or members of the Society, we find: John Matricciani, Dominic Cardinale, Frank Angelozzi, Pio Marocco, Dominic Pompa, Guglielmo DeAntoniis, Bernardo Gabriele, Camillo Iacoboni, Charles Piccirilli, etc.

The Society and the Church of St. Leo observe the annual Celebration of the Feast of St. Gabriel on the fourth Sunday of August with a Mass, Procession through the streets of Little Italy, and outdoors festivities. Thousands of people come from all over.

— (Prepared by Father Louis J.Lulli, SAC.)

Party. He served as a ward leader, an elected member of the State Central Committee, and traveled to several Republican conventions. John Pica, who was a teenager when Tony worked with Mayor McKeldin in City Hall, joked that in the summers all the crews working on the streets Baltimore City were teenagers from Little Italy. Tony made sure that his own people were taken care of. He also served in the South Pacific in World War II.

Nineteen Seventy-Six was an exciting year for all Italians living in Baltimore. The Amerigo Vespucci, along with other Tall Ships from around the world, visited the Baltimore Harbor. Tony used the occasion as a way to show his love and respect for Italians by entertaining the sailors from the ship. Through the Little Italy Lodge of the Sons of Italy, Tony, along with Mike Popoli and Johnny Dell'Uomo, organized a reception in St. Leo's Church Hall to welcome the sailors. He wanted them to feel at home.

Tony gained a strong sense of compassion and loyalty through the inspiration of the nuns and priests from St. Leo's. Well into the 1950s when his daughters were in Catholic school, many of the young nuns were from Ireland. With no family of their own nearby, Tony often acted as a surrogate father to them, driving them back and forth to their Motherhouse in Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania. As he drove, he would entertain them with his funny stories about his friends and himself growing up in Little Italy. When one of the nuns told him she was homesick and missed her family, Tony made arrangements for them to come and live in America. He helped them to settle in this country, find work, and continued to help provide them with transportation.

There are many more warm stories about Tony growing up in Little Italy. He was a man who never forgot his roots and remained loyal to his friends his entire life. Over the years many people have shared with his family all the generous things Tony did for others. His good friend, Vince Pompa summed it up the best "Tony's name suited him because he was a Prince of a man."

RINALDI FAMILY

My grandparents, Felix and Victoria Cardegna, came from the Abruzzi region of Italy in the late 19th century. Here, they operated an Italian-American grocery store, which served the Little Italy neighborhood for forty-eight years. The store was located at 406 South High Street. They raised four children and saw to it they all had a Catholic education.

Rooms upstairs from the store were rented to Italian men, who worked and saved money in order to bring their families to America. Grandmom was a giving person and no doubt was the matriarch of the family. For instance, the Priests at the Rectory never went hungry while Grandmom was around. Every week, free groceries were sent to the rectory. This went on for years. She was also close to the Nuns who taught her children and grandchildren. When the Chapel in the Convent

was being renovated, Grandmom was a contributor. I'm not sure my Grandfather knew just how much she contributed. My Grandparents were two amazing, loving, and giving people.

Later, my father, Robert Rinaldi, and my uncle, Peter Cardegna, purchased a stall in the Wholesale Fish Market. This was a harsh way to make a living; up at 2:30 A.M. to wait for deliveries. Both my father and uncle were very active in church activities. Whenever St. Leo's had an oyster roast, they were helping, and also supplied all the oysters and any other seafood needed, free of charge.

For many years, my father was President of the Holy Name Society. When he left that office, due to illness, he was given a large testimonial, a tribute to him, signed by the Priests and Officers. He was such a gentle man. My mother Anna joined the Sodality of Our Lady and was a devoted member. She worked in the Rectory counting money collected from the Masses. She and Grandmom were at the 6:30 Mass every day. In those days, she also worked for the Spaghetti Suppers held each year in the School Hall.

I can remember going to the hall at lunchtime for a meatball sandwich. My mother and other ladies were cooking the sauce and frying the meatballs. My parents also worked at St. Vincent de Paul Hall for St. Leo's Orphanage, cooking and serving spaghetti. Life for me seemed so simple then! My sister Victoria and I were in the Church choir, and sang at the 10:15 Mass every Sunday. In the late 1930's and early 1940's, the Sodality presented plays in which my sister and half of the Sodality members were participants. They also had a bowling league.

In 1957, two new side altars were purchased. The altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary was erected in memory of Felix and Victoria Cardegna by their four children. My mother donated the altar of St. Joseph in memory of my father. Am I proud of my Parents, Grandparents and my heritage? You bet I am!

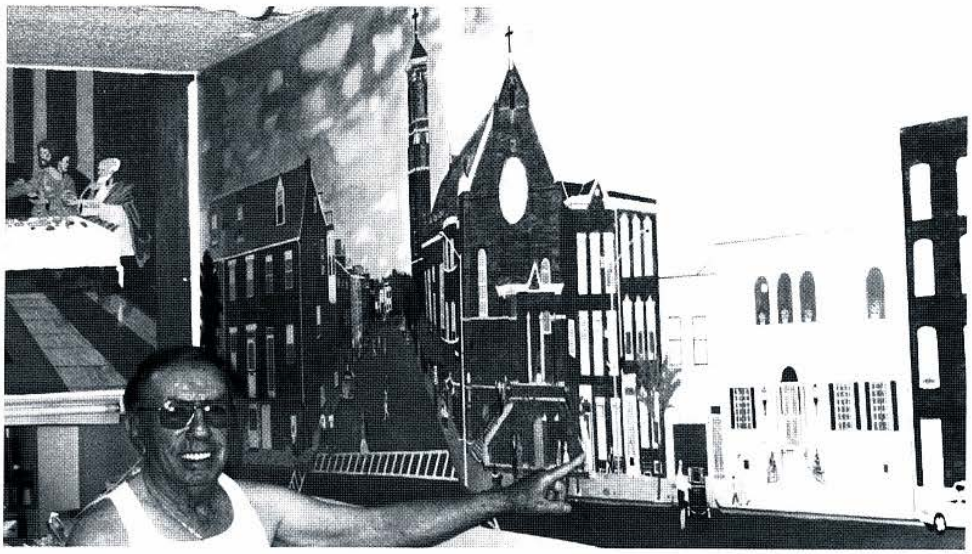
— Ann Rinaldi

SAM RUSSO

Giuseppe and Lena Russo came to America from Rosetta, Abbruzzi, arriving in Philadelphia between 1908 and 1910. They married, moved to Little Italy, and raised 10 children sat 215 S. Exeter Street. Only recently, the house was vacated by the Russo family. Their son, Sam, married, had three children, and 25 years later moved back to Little Italy. Since then, he and Cass Baccala reside in Ocean City, Maryland where Sam has brought St. Leo's Church and its neighborhood with him.

In his dining room and living room is an extended wall, which has a colorful mural of St Leo's Church and most of Exeter Street. It's quite an outstanding piece of art, and they open their home to all who would like to see it. Sam says that the mural took him a year and a half, and it was a labor of love.

Upon its completion, he was inspired to paint the Last Supper on another wall, which took another seven months. Still in the spirit, Sam painted the Holy Family, which took six months.



Sam, a mason by trade, stated that he had always wanted to be an artist. He certainly has accomplished his dream, and certainly has something of which to be proud.

Sam and Cass wish to extend congratulations to St. Leo's Church, and feel that St. Leo's is always with them. The neighborhood will always be their home.

SERGI FAMILY

Beginning its life in 1911 at 248 Albemarle Street by founder Anthony Sergi, Sergi's Ice House served Little Italy and the surrounding communities of East Baltimore over several generations. While it served as simply a commercial ice house, Anthony, with his seven sons ran the business over the years until 1970, when his daughter Jennie (Jean Sergi Kidwell) took over and turned the ice-house into a restaurant featuring Sicilian-style cooking.

Anthony and Mary Sergi originally arrived from Sicily and eventually settled in Little Italy. They were given the honorary title "The Largest Family in Little Italy and Baltimore City". They were the proud parents of 2l children. Ben, Vince, Tony, Joe, John, Dom, Frank, Pauline, Josephine, Natalie, Loretta, Jennie, Grace and Antoinette lived to marry. To this day, Jean Sergi Kidwell lives in Little Italy and attends Mass regularly at St. Leo's Church.

Anthony and Mary took their religious life seriously. Both were daily communicants at St.l.eo's; and Anthony was vice-president of the St. Leo's Confraternity. Anthony was also a member of the Sons of Italy Lodge when it was located near the Alcazar.

Sergi's Ice House Restaurant continued on for 14 years until the time when Jean made a solemn promise to her sister, Grace, to care for her children, after Grace passed away. Jean took to heart that promise. As a result of her unselfish act to put family first, Jean closed Sergi's Ice House in 1984 to care for Grace's children. Jean felt that her promise to her sister was more important than keeping the restaurant open. This caring, charitable decision brought to a close 73 years of a Little Italy tradition.

LUCY TAMASO

Lucy Tamaso

Lucy Tamaso, a resident of Little Italy and a member of St Leo's Church, was devoted to Saint Lucy. She was partially blind and she prayed to St. Lucy, her Patron Saint.

According to Frances Caliri, Lucy Tamaso and Guillamo DeAntoniis came to her home in the late 1930's asking for money to fund the Saint Lucy celebration. Then, in the late 1940's, Lucy Tamaso approached Frances Caliri to go with her door-to-door to collect money to fund the Feast. Frances remembers receiving $5.00 in one bar in the neighborhood. Lucy held it up to her good eye and was delighted. The money was used for flowers and candles for the Feast.

The Feast began to attract more people every year. Concetta Matricciani suggested that they offer coffee and homemade cookies to those that attend the Feast.

In the early 1950's, Lucy Pompa, Angie Matricciani, and Elvira Cuccina helped with the preparation of the Feast, which is held on the Sunday closest to the Feast day. Those attending enjoy the coffee and the homemade Italian cookies and the tombola prizes donated by friends.

Mary Pasquerriello currently collects the monetary donations for the flowers and candles.

Lucy Pompa promised Lucy Tamaso before her death in April 1983, that she would take over the Feast Day preparations. According to Lucy Pompa, there are over 250 people who attend the Mass and Celebration each year.

Lucy Pompa

TREVISONNO FAMILY

Tony the Tailor

Anthony Trevisonno was born in a town called Larino, Compobasso, Italy in the year 1887. He came to America as a young man in 1909, working in a tailoring factory where he met his wife, Rosina Rotunno, born in 1898 in the town of San Savera, Foggia, Italy.

They were married in 1914 at St. Leo's Church. They had six children: Theresa Tamberino, Mary Verdecchia, Daniel and Michael Trevisonno, Josephine Tirocchi, and Gloria Tirocchi. They were blessed with sixteen grandchildren and dozens of great grandchildren.

Tony had a cleaning and pressing shop located on the corner of Exeter and Stiles Streets across from St. Leo's Church. He was known to all his friends and neighbors as Tony the Tailor. He died in 1957, followed by Mother in 1973. Gloria is the only surviving child.

She and her husband, Louis Tirocchi, Sr., are retired living in Perry Hall, and are very active at both St. Leo's and Sons of Italy Lodge. Gloria and Louis are one of three sets of Trevisonno and Tirocchi siblings who married each other.

The family is still involved with the church and wishes to congratulate Fr. Mike on the 120th anniversary of St. Leo's.

Frances Merlo Vitilio

My *name* is *Frances* Merlo Vitilio. I will be 90 years in October of this *year.* There are a lot of things that I have forgotten over the years, but there are also a lot of things that I can remember.

Certificate of Marriage

Church of
ST. LEO'S
227 S. Exeter Street, Baltimore

This is to Certify

That Michael Vitilio
and Frances M. Merlo
were lawfully Married
on the 29 day of April 1934
According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church
and in conformity with the laws of the State of
Maryland. Rev. Hector Morrica
officiating, in the presence of Mary Merlo
and Thomas Pecorelli Witnesses, as appears
from the Marriage Register of this Church.
Dated June 6th 1934
Rev. Antony Colonna Pastor

These are some that I can remember. Mv mom Justina Teresa came to America when she was 17 years old. Her older sister and brother-in-law Vince Garofalo and Cira Garofalo sent for her. They had a store at 1067 E. Lombard Street. She came to live with them. A year later she met Louis Merlo who lived in the neighborhood and worked in a tailor shop. They fell in love and married in St. Leo's Church.

They got an apartment at 1018 Lombard Street on the *second* floor. A year later I was born and I got baptized at St. Leo s Church. When I *was 6* years old, I went to St. Leo's School and made my First Communion and Conformation there. When my mom had her second child, it was a boy. They named him Michael and he, too, was baptized at this same church.

He lived only two years and then died of pneumonia. He was buried from St. Leo's. A year later, my sister Mary was born on Christmas Day. She was baptized at the church and two years later my mom had a daughter named Rosalie, who was also baptized at this same church.

My mom and dad then bought a home on Bond & Gay Street and it had a fruit and grocery store on the first floor. My dad went into the fruit & grocery business. When I was 19 years old, I met a fellow at a dance whose name was Michael Vitilio, He & his family lived on Exeter Street across from St. Leo's Church, before they moved to Eden Street.

We fell in love and married two years later. Although I was miles away from the church, I

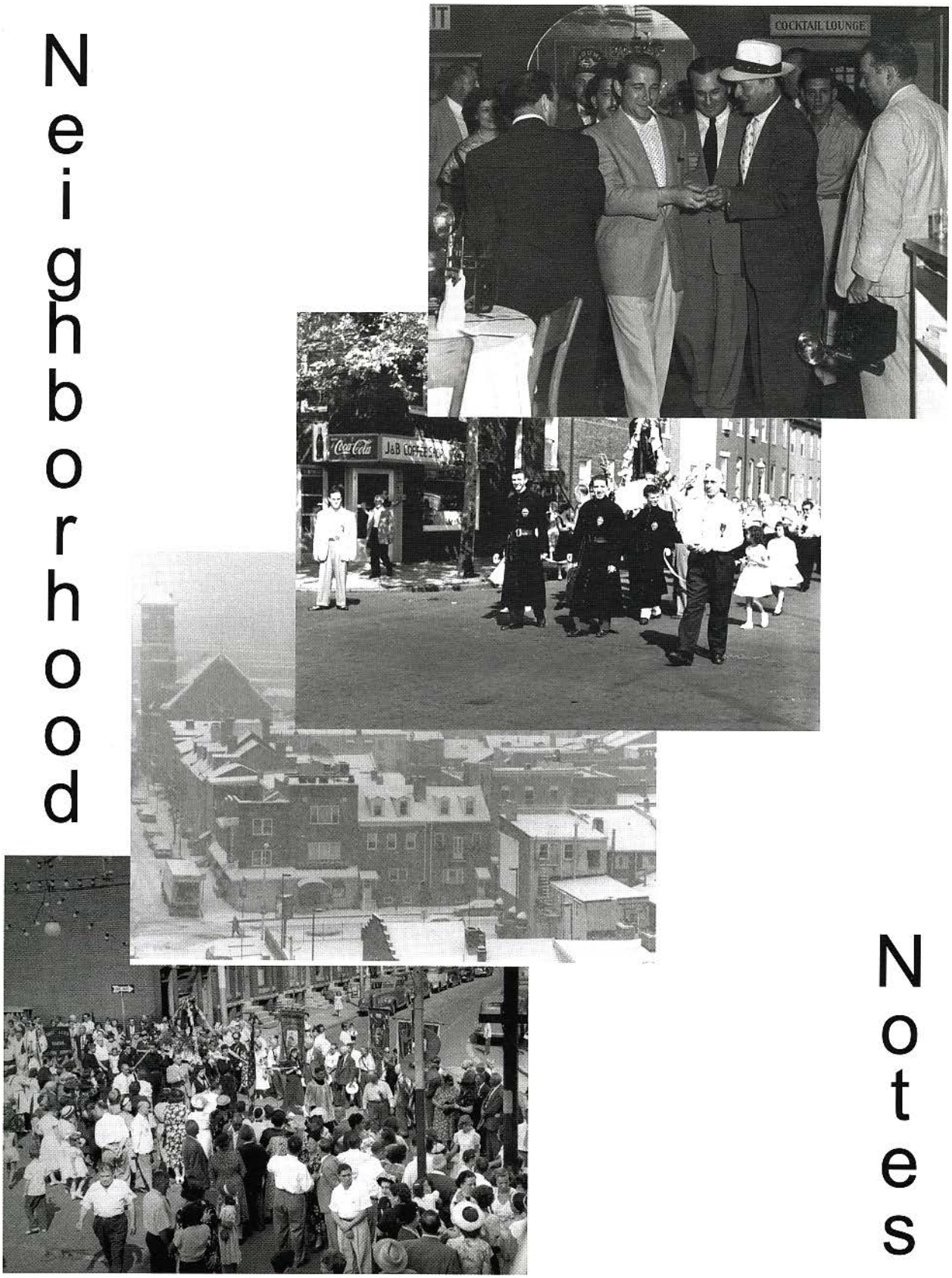
wanted to marry at St. Leo's. We set the date for April 29, 1934. One year later we had a son whom we named Anthony after my father-in-law. Our son was baptized at St. Leo's. We then decided to move to Albermarle St. at Pratt in an apartment next door to the flag house.

Seven years later we had a daughter. We named her Justina after my mom. When she grew up and decided to marry, she also married at St. Leo'S. As you can see, we have a lot of nice memories of Little Italy and St. Leo's Church.

Now my grand daughter Danielle Lombardi is engaged to be married, and she, too, is going to be married at St. Leo's Church.

- Frances Vitilio

Neighborhood Notes



FATHER MIKE: HE MADE US LAUGH AGAIN

Reverend Oreste Pandola, SAC, known informally to everyone as Father Rusty, was an intelligent and jovial man who had a passion for life, hang-gliding, and cream-filled doughnuts.

He served the Pallotines and the parishioners of St. Leo's for eight years and was looking forward to another three years when he died suddenly on January 17, 1997, after returning from a trip to New Jersey.

To him, any project was "a piece of cake." During his stay in Little Italy, he had started the adult learning center, now named after him, had the school hall renovated and elevators installed in both the church and the school. All the improvements showed his deep concern for the aging population of little Italy.

The elevators came to mind when, not long before his death, he was asked what epithet he would like on his tombstone, he replied with at typical laugh and thumbs-up, "going up."

Father Rusty's untimely death cast a pall over the entire community. People reacted as if a member of the family had died, and wept openly at his wake and the funeral Mass. Cardinal William Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, eulogized him as a "truly great pastoral leader. He spoke to the people in way which was at once witty and humorous and also quite profound."

Life goes on, and the people of St. Leo's wondered who would- or could- take his place. Divine Providence must have had a hand in the selection of Rev. Michael Salerno, SAC, a dyed-in-the-wool, cigar-smoking, card playing, deese and dose New Yorker with a Cheech-style moustache.

The new pastor, who had survived a near-fatal stabbing growing up in New York, had previously spent time in Baltimore, as a brother stationed at the Shrine of St. Jude. He had been a brother 25 years and a pastorship come only five years after ordination. He was serving as an assistant at our Lady of Pompeii in the Brooklyn section of New York when he got the appointment to St. Leo's.

On his arrival in Baltimore, luggage in hand, he walked into the church office and asked the secretary if anyone in the parish was hospitalized. Told there was, he dropped the bag and headed for the hospital.

It wasn't long before he showed the parishioners, still mourning their former leader, how to laugh again. It also wasn't long before people, enthralled by his down-to-earth manner and his sometimes outrageous humor, began flocking to the church in great numbers. His reputation has spread, and former parishioners, out of town tourists, and even non-Catholics have been attending services at the historic church.

The Little Italy community only has about 100 parishioners but attendance at the two Sunday and one Saturday masses has increased tremendously, as have the collections. Special occasions, like Christmas have attracted 1,000 worshippers. Not many, if any, churches can equal this phenomenon. Attendance at the two annual pasta dinners and the two festivals also has gone up.

Father Mike's homilies, delivered without notes from the center aisle, come from his heart and people have learned about his boyhood, his family, and his philosophy of life. He says in his usual self-deprecating manner, " I speak four languages: English, Italian, Latin, and Spanish- and they all sound the same."

Like his predecessor, he is a devout student of the Bible, but Father Mike puts the lessons into layman's terms and always with a personal story or two.

Like the time when he thought he would not have a new suit for his First Holy Communion, and eventually got one so shiny that it glowed. Or, before this Confirmation, when he saw a pigeon in church and thought it was the Holy Ghost until the bird did "do-do" on his sleeve.

Father likes to sum up before leaving the altar. Once he said, "It wasn't too long. I made you laugh, I made you cry, I sang for you, and I took your money. Not bad, huh?"

He has a special Mass for festival workers on Saturday night, what he calls his "no-frills Mass," which usually lasts about 15 minutes. "I'm getting absent-minded," he explained with a laugh, "I forgot the Gloria, the homily, and the collection".

The fifty-five-year-old New York-born priest likes to "affirm" when people are generous with their time or their money. All he has to do is ask for something and it happens, and there's always a plaque to acknowledge the individual who made the contribution.

Occasionally, he takes groups to volunteers to dinner in a restaurant, sometime in New York, where he likes to point out where he was born, on the second floor of what now is a Chinese grocery. "My father was across the street at the bar when I was born" he relates. "The place was called Mike's, and that's how I got my name."

Apocryphal? Who knows? Perhaps, but it's part of the charm of the man. If it produces a laugh- or a tear- he's satisfied.

Perhaps the defining moment of the love affair between Father Mike and the people of St Leo's came after the death of his mother.

Unbeknownst to him, parishioners and members of the Little Italy Lodge on one day's notice brought two full busloads to the Mass in New York.

Someone once said of him that "'he thinks he's dressed up when he puts his New York Yankees cap straight instead of backwards." His allegiance to New York may have died on Super Bowl Sunday when the Ravens were playing the New York Giants. Suddenly, during his homily, he opened his vestments to show a Raven shirt underneath. Arms upraised to heaven, he shouted, "Mom, forgive me!"

Father Mike, we luv ya!

- - Joe D'Adamo

PASTA DINNERS AT ST. LEO'S

Probably, the most popular and traditional events at St. Leo's Church are the semi-annual Church Dinners. They attract large numbers of people from near and far. St. Leo's Dinners are renowned and are highly anticipated.

Lucy Price, Ida Esposito, Margaret Petrella

Come rain or come shine, they draw crowds. The pioneers of this tradition were the ladies Lollie Cuneo Brichetto, Elizabeth Lutz Pecora, and Frances Bruno Cuneo. They had their devotion to their church, and the stamina, to begin these dinners, which began back in the 1920's. The attraction was the Spaghetti Dinners twice a year and the Oyster Suppers also twice a year, in between the Spaghetti Dinners.

The first Spaghetti Dinner was at a winter carnival held at the church. The dinners were served on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The menu was Spaghetti and Homemade Meatballs (the recipe today is only slightly varied from the family original). About 500 attended on these three days.

Eastern Avenue parishioners were involved, mostly relatives (men *and* women). Andy (Eight ball Andy) Azzaro, as he worked at the affair learned what it took to put on these dinners. So, he explained that if the church had these dinners on weekends instead of weekdays, more people would partake and the profit would be greater.

His advice was taken, and thus the pasta dinners became Sunday events. The Eastern Avenue families were responsible for initiating these very successful spaghetti dinners, but now many other parishioners have happily joined the work force, and that is why that endeavor continues to grow and succeed.

In 1950, Fr. Mario Schettino (Pastor), Fr. Flavian, Ida Esposito, and the Mothers Club, were instrumental in making homemade raviolis a part of the spaghetti dinners of today. Now, we look forward to more than 2,000 hungry patrons enjoying delicious and inexpensive Italian dinner at St Leo's. . Each adult gets six raviolis, one meatball, bread and salad. Coffee is served, and Cannoli dessert is available.

Ordering food to prepare this extravaganza is a challenge in itself; three hundred pounds of imported thin spaghetti are required. Making the ravioli (over 12,000 of them) usually takes three or four days, depending on the number of volunteers to make them. It is a fabulous

experience for these workers who number around thirty to forty. We have many newcomers who are willing to learn the art of making ravioli.

For the ravioli making, a commercial mixer is used to produce the balls of dough, which are then rolled out in thin sheets about a yard along and five inches wide. Then the volunteers fill and cut them to the right size. The famous saying is "don't forget to fork them," because if you don't they will fall apart while cooking.

The highlight of the day for the ravioli-makers is lunch, when the leftover dough is made into strips cut into homemade spaghetti cooked to perfection, and served to this hungry group. The day before the dinner, a group twenty or more volunteers will make around 4,000 meatballs, which are browned a little and then put into the sauce to complete their cooking. The sauce is made by one of our dedicated volunteers, Joe Campitelli, leading his crew.

All the pieces of the puzzle come together on Sunday, when another force of volunteers tend to the needs of the incoming visitors partaking of St. Leo's spaghetti/ravioli dinners. Wheels, games, crafts, souvenirs, etc. add to the enjoyment of this family-oriented fabulous event.

OUTREACH PROGRAM

When Father Michael Salerno became the Pastor of Saint Leo the Great Church in 1997, one of his first acts was to walk Little Italy's neighborhood and surrounding areas. He wanted to find out what was going on and where he was most needed. As it happened, he took a few sandwiches with him, which was "handed out" on his walk. Thus the idea of an Outreach Program was created.

Mary Sergi, who lives across the Street from the rectory, was solicited to help start the program. The following week Mary made 20 sandwiches in the rectory kitchen, which Father Mike delivered Friday afternoon. The following week, Mary got help from Rosemarie Gugliotta and Felicia Cerro. They made 20 sandwiches and added sweets that Father had on hand at the rectory and the program was off and running.

Initially, Father purchased all of the food. In a very short time, the word got around and there were a half dozen more volunteers and the program moved from the rectory dining room to the basement of the church, where it is at this time. Through personal contacts, various companies and stores were asked for donations to help with the program. Companies such as H&S Bakery, Meier's in Dundalk, Herman's Bakery, Entennman's and Wise Potato Chips are very generous with their products and this is most appreciated. Chiapparelli's Restaurant has supplied hot soup during the winter months of 2001.

At the present time, we still purchase lunchmeats, cheese, bags, drinks, and condiments. We are continuing to search for donors. Food and/or monetary contributions are graciously accepted.

For three years the program has provided a Thanksgiving Day Dinner for the Homeless. It is held in the Church Hall and the traditional Thanksgiving Day dinner is prepared and served by many church volunteers. Clothing is available for the homeless on that day.

From those few sandwiches, which Father Mike started, the program has grown to over three hundred sandwiches per week. Twelve volunteers are on a rotating schedule, preparing the bagged lunches and six volunteers deliver the food at 4:30 P.M. each Friday, to Saint Vincent DePaul Society, Karis House and Detox Center.

Current volunteers are: Rosemarie Gugliotta and Mary Sergi Co-Chairpersons; Maryann Alcaraz, Felicia Cerro, Josie Castello, Carmello D'Amico, Felicia Emery, Jean Kidwell, Mary Piccarreli, Lucy Plowden, Sandy Pompa, Anne Rinaldi, and Joe Cerro. Driver and deliverers are: Father Mike, Mary Bracken, Sammy Leonardi, Lucy Plowden, Harry Stein, Ed Volatile, and Bob Zelowski.

OUR SENIOR CITIZEN GROUP

Our Senior Citizen group met for the first time on October 14, 1997. This gathering took place in the School Hall. As we came together that day our group numbered twenty persons.

Although this had been our first gathering, much had preceded this day. Very early in August of 1997, Sister Mary Catherine Duerr met a friend who is a Sister of Mercy. This person mentioned that Father Michael Salerno, pastor at St. Leo's, was interested in hiring a Nun to work in the parish. Just a few days later, Sister Mary Catherine met with Father Michael at the rectory.

This meeting took place over lunch, the typical style in which a true Italian person welcomes you. We discussed the possibility of a Senior Citizen Program, and so, two weeks later, Sister Mary Catherine again met with Father Mike. Also there were Lucy Pompa, Josephine Giorgilli, Ann D'Adamo, Josephine Castello, and the late Angeline Lamberti. They further discussed organizing a senior citizen group. Consequently, Sister spoke about the program at all the Masses in the beginning of October, the Senior Citizen Group became a reality.

Our Seniors Group meets each Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. in the School Hall. We have a short prayer together; enjoy coffee, breakfast foods, and one another's company. We have Bingo with Mike Girolamo (who is the assistant to Sister Catherine) as our faithful caller. Lunch follows. Later, some enjoy playing cards. We celebrate the holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Mother's day and Father's Day.

Each month we honor, in a small way, those who are celebrating their birthdays during that month. We always have a special lunch on those days and a special cake. We have had

days of spiritual reflection during Advent and Lent. We go on bus trips, too! We have been to Friendly Farms, Emmitsburg. Arundel Mills Mall, Ellicott City and other places of interest to our Senior Group.

On a given Tuesday, there may be anywhere from sixty to eighty persons gathered for fun and companionship. We have even numbered ninety on occasion. We welcome all Senior Citizens of our parish to join us.

This Senior Citizen Group is truly a special group of people, as I believe it was through the working of the Holy Spirit that Sister Mary Catherine Duerr met Father Michael Salerno and that this organization for these wonderful people came into being.

May God continue to bless this gathering as they meet together each Tuesday.

- Nancy Azzaro

DRUM & BUGLE CORPS

The message was straight and direct, enough to strike fear into any 12-year-old schoolboy, "The Principal wants to see you." Of course, thoughts immediately ran into my mind. "What had I done to warrant this?" I wondered, as I slowly made my way to the Principal's office. This was way back in 1940 when I was in the sixth grade at St. Leo's.

Mike D'Adamo

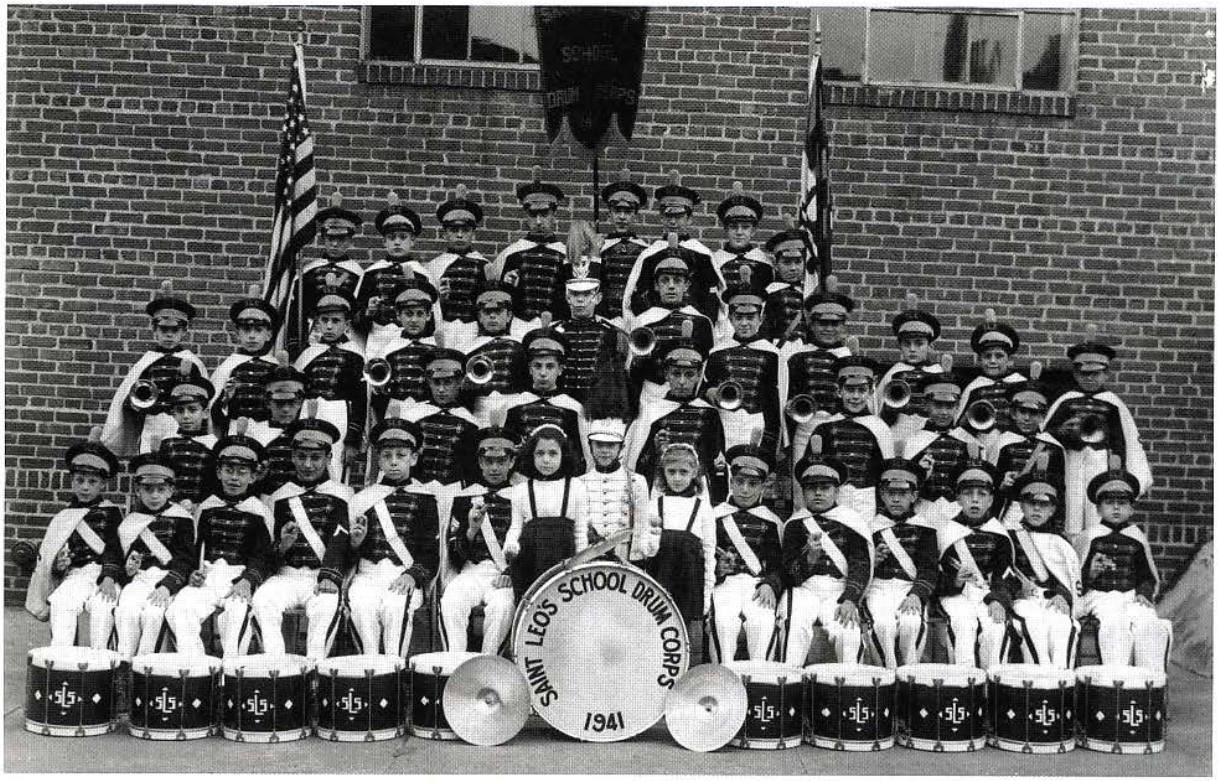
My fears were unwarranted. At least, I wasn't about to be reprimanded for some action. "We want you to model the uniform for our new Fife, Bugle & Drum Corps," Sister said.

I'd never thought of myself as a model. For that matter, I didn't think anyone else ever did, either. Of course, while the idea of my being a model may appear far-fetched today, given advancing age and weight, at the time, I was about 5-foot tall and only 120 pounds. Still, I approached the project with much trepidation.

First, I had to be measured, and when the uniform arrived, I had to go to each classroom and the rectory to give everyone a look at the proposed uniform. The colors were basically white with maroon accents. It had a cap with a large maroon pom-pom on the top and a cape around the shoulders.

The uniform was approved, and the following spring we were preparing to make our first official appearance in the church's May procession though the streets of Little Italy.

By this time, the students had chosen their instruments. There were no girls, just us guys. The feminine movement was years away.



I played the fife, a high-pitched flute, best remembered as the instrument used by one of the soldiers in the famed "Spirit of '76" painting. My brother Mike was the lead bugler, or Sergeant, and Tony D'Apice, a classmate, was selected as the Drum Major, or leader.

We were good, if I do say so myself, and the people of Little Italy were proud.

I marched and played in that first procession despite having been absent from school the week before with the mumps. When Sr. Rosetta saw me, she told me to stay home the next week because she detected that the mumps had shifted from the left side of my face to the right.

The idea for the corps generally is credited to Sister Laurentia, who herself could play the bugle, but as I recall, it originated with Sister Rosetta, who had come from St. Rose of Lima, where she also headed the Drum & Bugle Corps. She was transferred in 1943, and Sr.Laurentia took over.

POPE LEO XIII

I had heard a little bit about Pope Leo XIII, how he was pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church when St. Leo's was dedicated in 1881. He had sent a monstrance that Father Joseph Leo Andies used to bless the congregation at the first Mass. Pope Leo XIII had named Baltimore's Archbishop James Gibbons the first U.S. cardinal in 1886. As I said, I knew some things about this Pope who reigned from 1873 to 1903, but I never realized that some day I would come face-to-face with him. Obviously, the way that happened was very strange.

An article had appeared in the Baltimore Sun on Christmas Day in 1999. It was about the rebirth of St. Leo's School, which closed in 1980, but had been reopened as "The Oreste Pandola Adult Learning Center." The article had mentioned my name, since I was one of the individuals, along with Rosalie Ranieri, whom the late Rev. Oreste Pandola had asked to see if such a school was feasible.

Mrs. Mary Frances Sheppard had read the article and called me and asked if St. Leo' s would be interested in an oil painting she had of Pope Leo XIII. Since I knew some of the background of this great pope, I said I certainly thought there would be interest, and our pastor, Rev. Michael Salerno, agreed.

I made arrangements to go to Kingsville to pick up the painting. I had thought that it would be rolled, but it turned out to be five feet by six feet and nailed onto a plain wooden frame. It didn't fit into my car, and putting it on the roof was out of the question because it was raining buckets.

Mrs. Sheppard said she would see that it would be delivered to my home. A week later, she called and asked if I would be home, and about thirty minutes later, the little old lady, probably in her 80's, arrived with the painting.

How she came into possession of the painting was most unusual. Her father, she told me, had been a station agent at the old Greenspring Station and one day, a passenger had left the painting, either deliberately or had forgotten it. It was never claimed and remained at the station, waiting in vain for its owner.

When the little-used station ceased operations, Mrs. Sheppard said, her father asked other employees if anyone wanted the painting. There were no takers, so he took it home and put it in the basement. There it stayed until that newspaper article and the resultant chain of events that brought it into the possession of St. Leo's.

The painting was by an Italian painter, Filippo Castaggini, who was born in 1842 and studied art in Rome. He came to the U S at the age of 16 and lived in Upper Falls in the Northeastern part of Baltimore County. At one time, he lived in the Dowell House. Castagginni was a pupil of the great Italian artist, Constantino Brumidi, who labored from 1855 to 1880 to cover the inside of the dome in the nation's capital in Washington, DC with paintings depicting our nation's history.

Unfortunately, he had completed only about one-third of the work when slipped on scaffolding and fell. He died a couple of months later of injuries he received in the fall. Before he died, he commissioned his former student, Castaggini, to complete the arduous task.

From 1880 to 1885, Castaggini worked transplanting eight sketches into life-sized paintings on the dome. He also painted frescoes in cathedral in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore historic basilica of the Assumption, the first cathedral in the United States. He died in Upper Falls on April 15, 1907 at the age of 65. He is buried at the Mount Olivet Cemetery in the nation's capitol.

It is not known when or where Castaggini painted the life-sized portrait of Pope Leo XIII, who was born Gioacchino Vincenzo Pecci in Anagni, Italy. He was sixty-eight when he became Pope, and reigned 25 years.

Distinguished for his statesmanship, Pope Leo XIII wrote a number of encyclicals on marriage, freemasonry, education, and contemporary politics, which did much to integrate church policy with modern day life. His most famous encyclical was the "Rerum Novarum" in 1891 in which he countered the then-popular charge that the Church was a capitalistic institution by showing the socialistic character of Christian ideals.

— Joe D'Adamo

GROWING UP IN LITTLE ITALY

Little Italy was a community comprised of Italians from every section of Italy and consequently there were always good spirited arguments; but without malice. The arguments were about the scenic beauty of their individual region, the food, and the music; all claiming theirs was the best. One obvious theme was that they were all proud to be Italian. This brought a sense of cohesiveness in the diverse members of the community, and made them feel as one extended family.

The aroma of garlic, olive oil, and tomato sauce floated throughout the entire neighborhood. In the summer one could expect to hear singing accompanied by a guitar or mandolin. Despite the rivalry, everyone came to the aid of another neighbor when there was an emergency. When the mother of a household was ill, she often had her laundry done by one of the women in the neighborhood. Food was sent to the house by many of the women. The corner grocery store

Little Italy was a place to learn that the importance of one's being had nothing to do with one's bank account. One never felt lesser because of his financial status. The kids ate, played and went to school together. Every walk of life of life was represented in the neighborhood. There were laborers, artisans, educators, contractors, lawyers, politicians, restaurateurs, etc. The Mayor of the city lived in the heart of Little Italy.

A boy's *talent* placed him on the church baseball or basketball team. A boy with less talent may have had the honor of his dad *buying new uniforms*, but **money** never gave him a position on the team. During those days, it was unusual for St. Leo's teams not to be city champions.

It may have been that all things revolved around church activities, and ultimately the church was the real equalizer. This background made it very easy for those born in Little Italy to be just at ease with someone in a soup kitchen as with one who held a high position in public office or with the head of a corporation.

This was a valued lesson to learn with *living* being the real instructor. In God's eyes we all have the same worth.

There were many poor families in the neighborhood, but because the wonderful closeness of their surroundings *no one ever knew poverty.*

—Andrew Lioi
—Caroline Chiapparelli Gramil

Also Known As

Baltimore's "Little Italy" is without a doubt Neighborhood of all Neighborhoods. This small unique domain has persevered throughout generations. Everybody knew everybody from Pratt St. to Eastern Ave., President St. to Eden St., and beyond. Since the birth of "Little Italy," many of our innovators have since left us, leaving behind legacies of countless stories. We all know these extraordinary characters by their special traits and nicknames, which were usually acquired from peers or within the family. We hope the following nicknames bring back many good memories. Please forgive any misspelling or omissions of names. A big thanks to all who contributed.

REAL NAME	NICK NAME
Mike Amonica	"BUMFIN"
Louie Antonio	"LEACH"
Angelo Azzaro	"8-BALL ANDY"
Anthony Azzaro	"EIGHT BALL"
Anastasia Baccala	"BUTTERCUP"
Joe Barbera	"BALLS"
Lou Belletti	"CHAT"
Carmen Bertazon	"BUSTER"
Wm Bertazon, Sr	"PICCININI"
Joe Bertorelli	"CHIPPY"
Charles Bonica	"ENGINE"
Jay Borsella	"J.J."
Eddie Bova	"BOWLEGS"

REAL NAME	NICK NAME
Anthony Bruni	"DONDI"
Joe Bruni	"BLOWTOP
Leo Bruni	"BAGS"
Donald Cannetti	"DUCKY"
Dominic Carroza	"CROWBAR"
Ralph Cavalera	"SKIZZY"
Emanuel Cella	"FEET'
Richard Cella	"DICK the DICKER"
Paul Cello	"SNIFFERS"
Matilda Chiapperelli	"CHUCK"
Frank Cippoloni, Sr	"BIRD"
Paul Ciulla	"GARFIELD"
Nick Collevecchio	"NICK THE GREEK"
Andy D'Amico	"TARZAN"
Sal D'Amico	"SABO"
Regina Della Noce	"DOLLY"
Steve Della Vecchio	"STEEL BONES"
Charles DePasquale	"SCHNOZ"
John DeTota	"SKINNER"
Frank DiAngelo	"FOOKEY"
Frank DiAngelo	"SQUAWKER"
Phil DiAngelo	"THE NUT"
Mike DiLiello	"RUNT"
Charles DiSeta	"PAPERS"
Eugene DiSeta	"JEEP"
Mildred DiSeta	"MOOKEY"
Bill Durazzo	"SONNY"
Frank Falano	"SHIRLEY"
Dominic Fideli	"SAILOR"
Tony Franchetti	"SNIPER"
John Galeano	"GOOGLES"
Tom Galentino	"YAMI"
Vince Gentile	"DITHERS"
Cosmo Geppi	"TOOTIE"
Tony Giorgilli	"BURT"
Richard Heyman	"DICKIE"
Mike Iannantuono	"ZEKE"
Xavier Jeanetta	"MOE"

REAL NAME	NICK NAME
Phil Lancione	"LUNCHMEAT"
Rudolph Leonardi	"SONNY"
John Lioi	"JAP"
Casper Lozzi.Sr	"JESU CRISTE"
Joe Maggio	"TURTLE"
Jasper Mammolito	"SAILOR"
Sonny Manna	"GUNGA DIN"
Larry Marino	"KILLER"
Joe Messina	"CHICAGO"
Anthony Minento	"SILVER"
Dominic Minento	"PUGGY"
Frank Minento	"MATUSKA"
Joe Minento	"TONTO"
Benny Modo	"BLACKFEET"
John Molino	"JAY"
Marion Mugavero	"MUGS"
Joe Musella	"MUSHER"
John Musotta	"MUSTARD"
Angelo Nucci	"LEFTY"
Ormo Nucci	"WEDDY
Joe Orla	"KILROY"
Lou Palughi	"COCKY JOE"
Marco Palughi	"BUDDY"
Pete Palughi	"SHOOTERS"
Rosaro Dino Paratore	"SODDY"
William Parenti	"WHOOPS"
Mike Pasquarelli	"BAT"
Louis Patti	"IGGY"
Anthony Pellegrini	"BUDDY"
Frank Pellegrini	"JUNIOR"
John Pellegrini	"POPEYE"
Anthony Peluso	"PIGGY"
Ray Peluso	"RABBIT"
Tony Petti	"DUFFY"
Anthony Pizza	"TWIGGY"
Paulie Pizza	"JACK DEMPSEY"
Pasquale Platerote	"MR. BILL"
Vince Platerote	"KHAKI"
Dominic Pompa	"CHUBBERS"
William Pompa	"RUFF"
Mike Popoli	"HOKIE"
Gerard Puglese	"JEEP"

REAL NAME	NICK NAME
Michael Romeo	"DUKE"
Mike Rudy	"KELLER"
Ron Sapia	"CHAMP"
Anthony Sartoro	"DRAPEY"
Joe Scardara	"PEEPO"
Anthony Schiavo	"CORKY"
Thomas Scilipoti	"MAZZI
Joe Serafini	"PEPINO"
Anthony Sergi	"CLARKY"
Benny Sergi	"ICEMAN"
Concetta Sergi	"TOOTSIE"
Ignatius Sergotik	"IGGY"
Benny Sudano, Sr.	"GRAVEYARD"
Charles Sudano	"BANANAS"
Joe Sudano	"CHALKY"

REAL NAME	NICK NAME
Mike Sudano	"BOBO"
Phillip Sudano	"BOB STEELE"
Sam Sudano	"JOY"
Sal Trombetta	"SHORTY"
Tony Trevissano	"TONY the TAILOR"
Jake Uddeme	"SNAKE"
Joe Uddeme	"BEANERS"
Tony Uddeme	"FOO"
Vincent Uddeme	"LIGHTNING"
Arthur Yacola	"DUKIE"
Joe Yacola	"YOCKEY"
Bob Zelkowski	"DOSHER"
Mike Zito	"MASH"

THE CORNER GUYS

It all started, I believe, in the winter of 1959. It was Saturday night at our weekly St. Leo's CYO chaperoned dance inside the church hall. We were all between the ages of 13-15 years. The majority of the attendees were neighborhood kids, having outsiders from other parishes. It was mandatory at the socials that girls wear a skirt or dress and the guys wear a coat and tie.

The guys (John "Skinner" DeTota, Frank "Fookey" DiAngelo, Richard DiSeta, Billy Givens, Lou Williams and I) were hanging out at our usual spot near the stage, close to the entrance of the Church's wine cellar steps. Next to the kitchen area there was a stationary soda machine between the girls' and boys' bathrooms.

This machine contained different brands of soda, one being Nehi grape. Well, one of the guys got a bright idea to purchase Nehi grape soda and substitute the soda with the Priest's red wine. The plan was to buy a Nehi grape soda, enter the boy's bathroom and empty out about two thirds of the soda. Then exit and return to our corner.

While the chaperons were busy, one of the guys would enter the church's wine cellar and fill up the Nehi bottles with red wine. Needless to say, we were *Happy, Happy, Happy*. This went on for a couple of weeks until one neighborhood girl decided that since the guys were not dancing anymore, enough was enough.

So, she tattled on us, and each family had to pay the church $15.00 dollars for the consumed wine. Since we were altar boys, Sister Ernestine gave us the extra duty of serving additional masses and Novenas, thus giving the good boys some time off. By the way we drank about one-third of a small barrel, I think, in three Saturdays.

— Bill Bertazon

REMEMBER

By Andrew A. Lioi

The streetcar tracks of the Nos. 5, 10, and 18 trolley lines? * The trains on Central Avenue and down Pratt Street to Eastern Avenue? * The Bath House on High Street, Hendler's Ice Cream plant on Baltimore Street, as well as the JEA ,and the Baltimore Ear Nose and Throat Hospital? * The Fish Market, the Wholesale Produce Market, and the watermelon boats, and oyster boats along the piers of Pratt Street, as well as the ship sailing to Norfolk. Virginia? * Or the banana boats and the Tolchester Line with Moonlight cruises on Light Street?

The Hippodrome with vaudeville, the Century Theatre and Keith's Roof for dancing? * The Town Theatre and the Rivoli, as well as the Gayety, and the "Scratch Houses" where one could see a movie followed by strippers? * The places on Baltimore Street where one could buy a hot dog and a soda for ten cents or two hot dogs for the same price? * Lexington Market, The Hub, Hutzler's, Hochschild Kohn, Stewart's, McCrory's, Kresge's, and Brager-Eisenberg, as well as Read's Drug Store?

Fawn Street

Scarlett Seed Company, the lumber companies along Jones Falls, and "Splinters Beach" where the kids of I.ittle Italy would go swimming- often in the nude? * The pumping station, the morgue, and President Street Railroad sheds? * The scrap metal companies, the lumber companies, and the packing houses along Aliceanna St. and Fleet St.?

Lombard St. with Giammona's, Pastore's, Garafola's, Attman's Corn-beef Deli, Stone's Bakery, Holzman's Bakery, Yankeloff's live poultry store, as well as Smelkinson's Dairy Store, and Tulkoff's Horse Radish? Bob's Clothing Store, Faiman's, the Synagogue, and the tailor shops where many of the Italians were employed? * Borshay's pickle factory, the Chinese Laundry. DeManns hardware, the rag factory on Fawn Street, the early restaurants like Roma, Neopolitan Pizza, Bella Roma, Velleggia's, and DiNittis, the grocery stores such as Vaccarino's,

Trovato's, and Marano's where live chickens were sold and, at Easter, live lambs? * The "bacala" hanging from the ceiling like stiff boards, and baskets of live snails, when in season. Pavone's store where the snails slithered up the glass front store window * The picking of "Chigoria," and the sale of minnows? * Lancelotta's, Louge's, Mariano's, Lioi's Drug Store, and Kelly-Poggi Drug Store? The list could go on and on, but space is limited.

Can you remember attending St. Leo's School and going to St. Leo's Church? Ah! Now that is the heart of the Little Italy!

ST. LEO'S SCHOOL

By Andrew A. Lioi

The School Sisters of Notre Dame taught at St. Leo's School and they lived in a convent, which was separated from the school by the schoolyard. The convent abutted an alley, and there was a seven-foot high brick wall along the alley and across the rear of the property, which then connected to the school building.

Fr. Messina, 1932 grads

The nuns in those days wore black habits with a stiff white linen cloth, which came across their brows, down along the cheeks, and under the chin. The stiff white material spread to the shoulders and halfway down their chest to form a bib. Around their waists, they had a black rope or band to which a long rosary with large brown beads and a huge crucifix was attached and hung down the black habit which reached down to their toes.

No hair could he seen protruding from around the white linen cloth and black veil that enclosed the entire head except for the eyes, nose, mouth, and chin. There was much speculation among the children as to whether the nuns sported crew cuts or had their hair bobbed. It was stifling hot in the summer and the only way to get some relief was to insert a finger between the cloth and the cheek, or pull a hanky from the depths of the long sleeve and blot the beads of perspiration from the face.

The Italian immigrants had great respect for the Sisters and made sure that their children also respected the nuns. It was unthinkable that a parent would question the right of a nun to discipline a child and woe to the child that was punished for he or she got twice as much from the parent. One nun in

Fr. Lulli, 1944 grads

St. Loe's Basketball Team

the fourth grade had a ruler that was 2½ inches wide and ¼ inch thick. It was made from the finest ash wood; the same wood from which baseball bats are made, and it was finished with a clear varnish. Sister Ursula rarely disciplined anyone, but when she did, she would then go into the cloakroom and softly sob for a few seconds.

One thing was certain. You got a good education and you learned to respect your teachers. And about the corporal punishment that was meted out? Well, there was little delinquency, or none, among the students of St. Leo's Parochial School.

St. Leo's Little League

APICELLA'S OSTERIA

In 1919, Isadore and Rose Vaccarino opened Vaccarino's Grocery Store. It was on the corner of Stiles and High Streets. They kept the store until 1949, when they sold it to Alphonse and Eleanor Apicella.

It was on March 1, 1949 that the doors opened to the then-named Apicella's Grocery. After thirty-six years, in 1985, Eleanor and Alphonse retired and sold the store to their son, Jerry.

Apicella's was a real convenience for the people in the neighborhood. Not only was it a place for the women- and sometimes the men- to buy their groceries, but it also served as a meeting place. Jerry kept the business for thirteen years and then decided to put it up for sale.

Stephanie Kight and Dominic Greco

In August of 2000, Jerry Apicella's granddaughter, Stephanie Kight and her partner,

Dominic Greco, bought the corner store and named it Apicella's in honor of Stephanie's grandfather.

The store is now called Apicella's Osteria. The new store's specialties are brick oven pizza, submarine sandwiches, Italian deli products, and desserts. The storekeepers also do catering and make their own sausage and mozzarella. It is a real joy to see Apicella's back doing business on the same corner.

LITTLE ITALY'S CINEMA AL FRESCO

In 1999, The Little Italy Restaurant Association, L.I.R.A., hoped to place a "Welcome To Little Italy" sign on a large wall at the corner of High and Stiles Streets. An artist was contacted and he suggested that a plywood surface be placed upon the brick wall to enhance the finished artistic project.

After the wooden canvas was constructed, the City of Baltimore refused to allow the signage because it was not properly zoned for a "billboard." This was a source of much pain and aggravation for the members of L.I.R.A., because it was only meant to be a nice way of welcoming visitors to our great neighborhood. What to do? What to do?

At the next monthly L.I.R.A. meeting, it was jokingly suggested that our sign be used as a movie screen. Hmmm- not a bad idea! Well, that started the ball rolling.

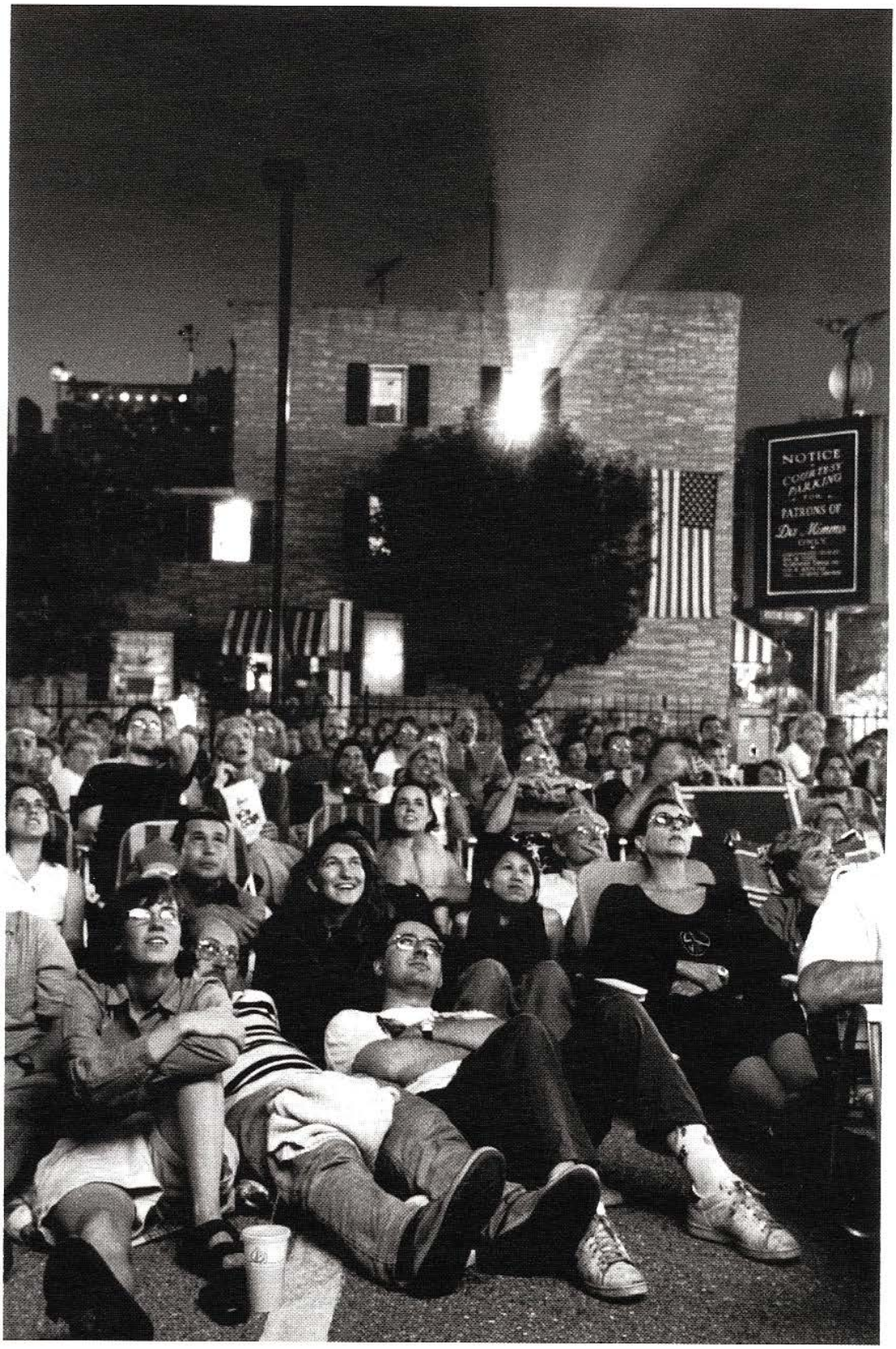
There was a window directly across the street from the movie screen. It was the third floor bedroom window of Mr. John Pente. When L.I.R.A. approached Mr. John with this "crazy idea", his answer was "I trust you and whatever is best for the neighborhood..." This was a gift from the heart and truly defines a "real neighbor."

Maryann Cricchio, President of L.I.R.A. and Roland Keh, Vice-President of L.I.R.A. located the tools necessary to start the 1st Annual Little Italy Open-Air Film Festival. Through their hard work, they were able to begin "Cinema al Fresco."

Mr. John Pente

Now every Friday summer night, the corner of High and Stiles Streets comes to life with thousands of visitors who want to feel Little Italy's warmth at it's best. The event attracted local, national, and international media coverage from Italy, Romania, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, and the Czech Republic. ABC World News, Good Morning America, People Magazine, Northwest Airlines, The Washington Post and The New York Times were just some of the interested parties visiting Little Italy during that famous summer of 1999. The rest of the story is now history.

God doesn't always give you what you ask for, but if you patiently pray, He sometimes rewards you with something much greater!


NOTICE
PATRONS OF

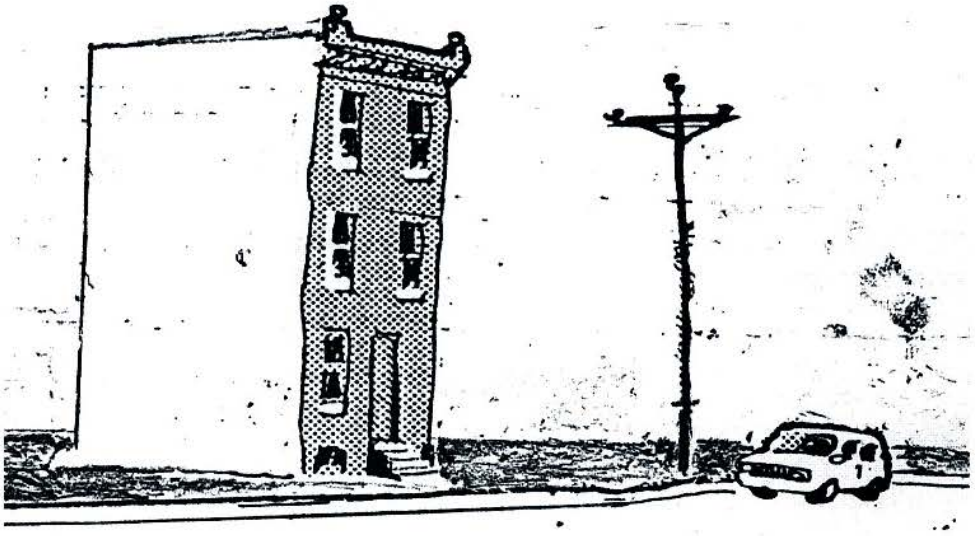
LUIGI D'ADAMO
FOUGHT CITY HALL and WON!

I was born at 323 South Eden Street.

Sometimes when I tell people that, they respond, "I thought you said you were born in Little Italy?" That's when my Italian blood boils. Really!

Some people seem to have forgotten that Little Italy went as far east as Bond Street. That was before Uncle Sam, in cooperation with the City of Baltimore, then headed by Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. decided to build the low-cost Perkins Homes, starting with the odd side of Eden Street. This took place in 1940, when I was going into the seventh grade at St. Leo's. My brother Mike- two years older- was going into the eighth grade. (He lost one year because of illness).

This led to an unusual situation, one that to this day still makes me proud of my immigrant father, Luigi, born in Vasto Marino, Italy in 1895. He was not "book smart", but was a man of considerable intelligence.



323 S. Eden Street

When the City of Baltimore condemned the properties on the odd side of the 300 and 200 blocks of South Eden Street, claiming *eminent domain*, they offered homeowners the assessed value of their houses. Now, if you know anything about houses, you know that usually the assessed value is about half the actual market value. The City wasn't doing anybody any favors. My lather never heard the expression, "You can't fight City Hall", and he decided to fight.

Others on the block, considered a fight futile, and accepted the city's "generous" offer. Pop went looking for a house for his wife and five kids, and found one in what is now called Butcher's Hill near Patterson Park. Before he stared to renovate the property, he hired a lawyer to do battle against the city, attempting to improve the offer.

We had a three-story house, one story taller than the other houses, with nine rooms, six of them bedrooms, a summer kitchen, a deck with lots of St. Ann's plants, a yard with huge fig trees, a basement with a cantina that my father had dug out under the yard for his wine barrels. It had one more distinguishing feature: a yellow brick front with marble steps, whereas the others were red brick with wooden steps. (The marble steps were ideal for step ball, which we frequently played there).

As negotiations with the city dragged on, the bulldozers arrived on Eden Street. By this time, we were living on Montford Avenue, but Mom insisted that we should continue at St. Leo's rather than transfer to St. Elizabeth's. On most days, my brother and I walked the mile and a half from Montford Ave. On our daily trips, we saw that one by one, all of the houses except #323 went down. Finally, it was the only one remaining, since the court case was still being fought. This whole thing was hard for an 11-year-old to take, looking at that beautiful yellow brick house, the only building still standing.

Even today, I avoid the 300 block of Eden Street because it brings back too many painful memories about our loss, and the man who refused to accept a low bid for a house that he had constructed with his own hands.

Finally, one day, as Mike and I walked "by", we saw that the house was gone. We didn't say a word to each other. Pop had won his battle, getting double the assessed value, but not the true market value. Yes, Luigi won, and he was happy about that, but in his heart, he knew he lost. And he would never forget about it.

— Joe D'Adamo

FLAG HOUSE PROJECTS

Roberto Marsili and Nazzareno Velleggia, life-time residents of Little Italy, still remember witnessing their life-long friends and neighbors being forced out of their homes in 1954. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) wiped-out half of Little Italy to replace it with the Flag House Projects. Roberto Marsili and other Little Italy masons helped in the construction of these projects just about 47 years ago. On Saturday morning February 10, 2001 at 8:05 A.M., R.Marsili and N.Velleggia pressed the button "wiping-out" the high rise projects with mixed feelings.

Now that the buildings are down, and the dint has settled, it's time to give the public the history and the "rest of the story" about The Flag House Projects. The reason, since our news media and our elected public officials have refused to mention the concerns, or even listen to memories of the past and present Little Italy residents. They worked a lifetime to own their own home to enjoy the American dream. Instead, they were punished in 1954 and still to this day for being good citizens.

The "political experts" such as Senator Paul S. Sarbanes of Maryland echoed sentiments saying "we never should have had families in these high-rise and the low-rise projects." He, and other elected officials, don't have a kind word or care about what happened to the

former Italian residents who were forced to move from "their homes" by our government in 1954". The current community of Little Italy and the former residents who were removed 47 years ago still feel betrayed.

A joint effort by the Little Italy Community Organizations pulling together are determined to protect themselves and the area from the same subsidized public housing under a new disguise of a "townhouse community." We believe it is history repeating itself.

Our future plans are to reclaim one square block of our former community and develop it into Flag House Plaza Visitors Center with landscaped open parking for buses and cars to visit the historical sites and the inner-harbor east-west. My friends, we are interested in your views and your opinion about this idea.

— Roberto Marsili

(excerpted from the original article)

ORDER SONS OF ITALY IN AMERICA
Grand Lodge

Dr. Vincenzo Sellaro and five other Italian immigrants founded the Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA) in 1905 in New York City. It is the longest established, largest and most demographically diverse organization representing the 23 million men and women of Italian heritage in the United States.

OSIA and its two subsidiary organizations, the Commission For Social Justice (CSJ) and the Sons of Italy Foundation (SIF) work to preserve the rich cultural heritage of Americans of Italian descent; cooperate with U.S. and Italian organizations to strengthen trade, business and educational opportunities between America and the European community: represent the interest of Italian American families, young professionals and retirees before the U.S. congress: and strive to promote the positive contributions of Italian American men and women.

OSIA's one half million family members represent a broad cross section of the Italian American Community. Many are involved in OSIA activities at the national level and in one of OSIA's 750 local chapters. Men and women share equal status within OSIA. As do individuals of all professions and ages.

Record of achievement

Donating millions of dollars to national and international charities and philanthropies, including the March of Dimes, American Red Cross, Cooley's Anemia Foundation, Arthritis Foundation, Cerebral Palsy, Boys Town of Italy, The Children's Inn at NIH, National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, Alzheimer's Association and hundreds of local organizations Providing more than $600,000 in scholarships annually, and more than $28 million since 1968.

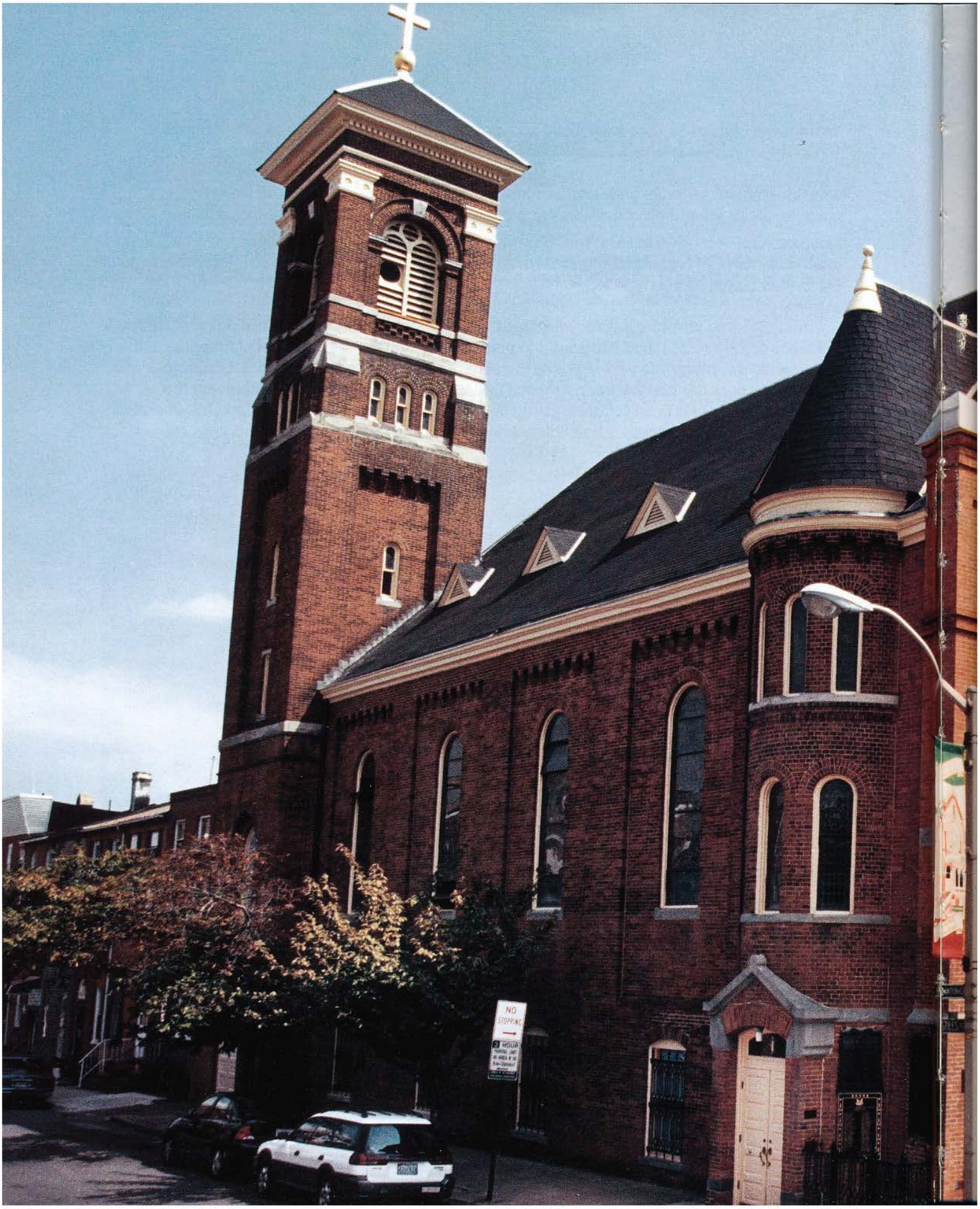
Contributing more than $150,000 to the Statue of Liberty Restoration and the construction of the Immigrant Wall of Honor on Ellis Island.

The contributions given to assist during the earthquake disaster, the contributions of all the Lodges under the umbrella of the Grand Lodges throughout the U.S.
The fraternalism and good works throughout the U.S., and keeping the heritage and culture a priority, to live and teach our families by sharing our traditions in a positive way.

Of course, our individual lodges, under the umbrella of the Grand Lodge, do our work (Charity, Human Interest, and the needs of others, etc.).

Overall, we are a great Lodge, and should be proud of our accomplishments, and remember: **"YOU ARE THE LODGE"**

Nancy Azzaro
Immediate Past President
Little Italy Lodge.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STOPPING

Our Congratulations

To St. Leo's Church for

120 Years of Ministry to

Our Little Italy Community

And

Our Most Heartfelt Thanks

To Father Mike Salerno for

His Inspiration and Dedication

As He Carries on That Ministry

Into This Twenty-First Century

Anna Olga Julio,
Phyllis Della Rocca
And
The Carl T. Julio Family

In Loving Memory
of
Alvira and Gioacchina
Lancelotta

IN MEMORY OF OUR DEAR PARENTS

James L. and Virginia (Ertola) Lazzati

Born: January 25, 1876
Died: August 1952

Born: June 9, 1894
Died: March 12, 1950

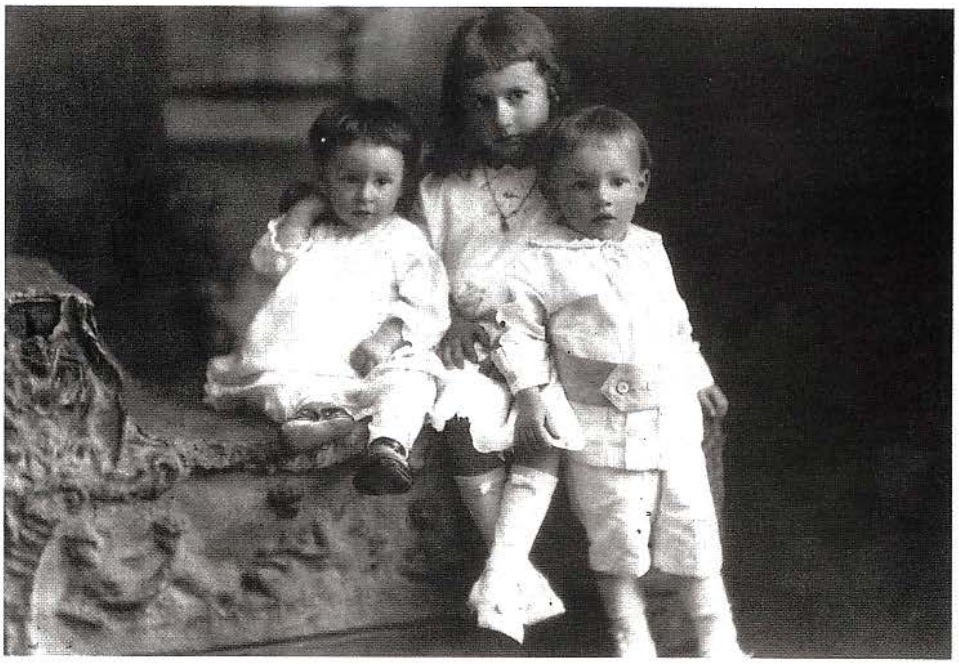
By Their Children

Josephine L., James P., John L.

Graduated from St. Leo's 1929

Graduated from St. Leo's 1931

Graduated from St. Leo's 1932



In Loving Memory of

JOHN L. LAZZATI

Born: July 4, 1918 – Died August 24, 2000

By His Wife
Josephine Marocco Lazzati

And Children
John
Roseanne
Tom

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The Little Italy Lodge, OSIA, meets the second Tuesday of every month in the Lodge Home, 905 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

Annual Dues: $20.00
Phone: 410-685-3116 or 410-931-1323

Former Presidents:
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Current President:
Joe D'Adamo

Best Wishes for Continued Prosperity From The Mannetta-Poma Families

Back Row: *Mark Mannetta-Poma, Beatrice and Elia Mannetta*
Front Row: *Carlo and Loredana Poma, Massimiliano and Rosalinda (Manetta) Poma, Gioconda and Alfonso Mannetta*

The Mannetta-Poma Families have been involved with St. Leo's since April 1953, when Alfonso and Gioconda Mannetta arrived from Italy with their growing family to begin their new life in Little Italy. Since 1953, the Mannetta-Poma family have remained residents in their beloved community of Little Italy, expanding their family to include Massimiliano, who married Rosalinda, their son, Mark, as well as Beatrice, Elia's wife all of whom reside in Little Italy.

Congratulations
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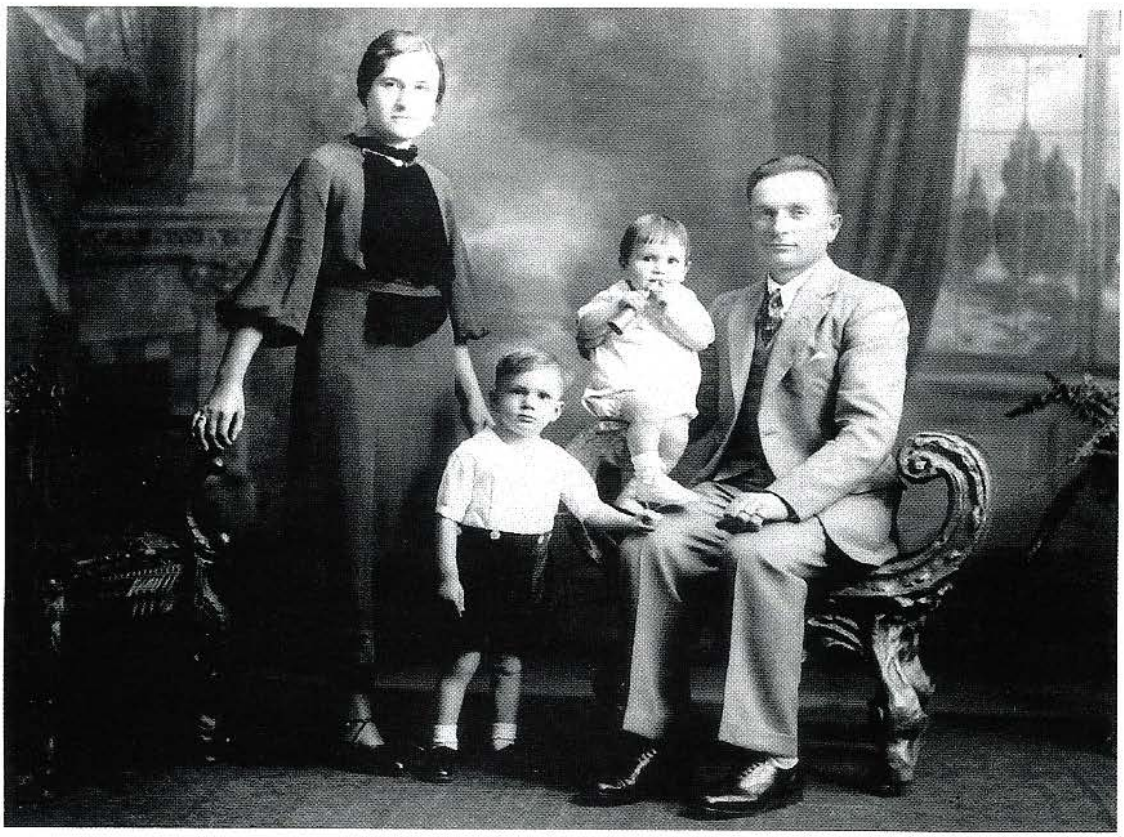
In Memory of
my Parents,
Giovanni and Maria Marsili,
and my Brother,
Raffele Marsili.
Giovanni Marsili arrived in America in 1920
and
Maria Marsili arrived in 1927.
I am fortunate that I can say I still have the
memory of the
love and devotion my parents had for
family and our fellow man and country.
From Roberto Marsili



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Susan Ianantuono Whittington
In Memory of Virginia "Babe" Butta
Domenica "Cic" Ritzel
Miller-Garbo Family
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The Corner of Fawn and High

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the parishioneers and friends of S. Leo's Church for supplying the pictures and information that we needed to put together this fabulous 2nd edition of the anniversary of this great parish. We are grateful and God bless you.

The dedication, loyalty and expertise and creativity of the 120th anniversary book is because of the following committee:

Nancy Azzaro, chairperson
Marian Arminger
Anthony Azzaro
Harry Connolly
Ann Giongilli D'Adamo
Joe D'Adamo
Mike Di Liello
Caroline Chiapparelli Gramil
Christopher Mazzulli
Ray Peluso

Their dedication and loyalty went above and beyond what was asked of them. . .
Multi grazie.

Then there are those who assisted us in the editiing, filming, research, favors, etc. And they are:

Connie Bannister
Charles Ferraro
Angie Guerriero
Debbie d'Adamo Hummel
Betty Thompson

The Corner of Eastern Ave. and Albemarle St.

Special thanks to:

Anthony Silvana - purchase of banner
Thomas Scilipoti – photos
Martin's West – Wayne Resnick, Deanna Wertz
Charm City – signs
Jim Vaccaro – Roundhouse Printing
Jeffery Caplan – Super Linens
L.I.R.A.– printing of tickets

A grateful thank you to the DeSales family, for the use of Tony's artwork throughout this book.

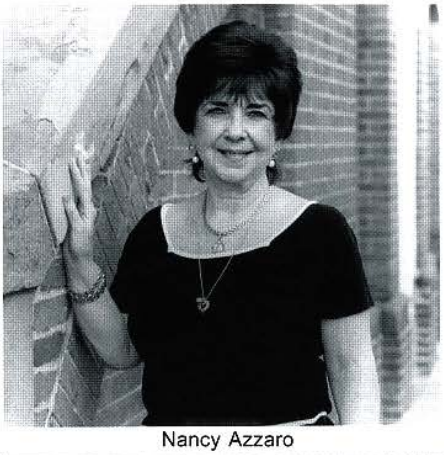
A special thank you to Frank Mirable, who gave us insight to begin this venture.

A very special thank you to the committee's families for giving us the love, time and support to be able to take on this wonderful and rewarding project.

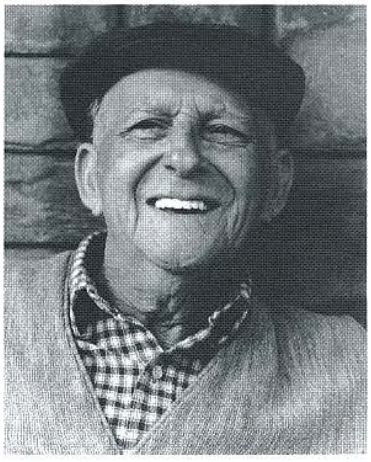
Father Mike – the committee wishes to thank you for your trust and faith in us. It touches our hearts and it was a true labor of love.

God bless each & every one of you
Nancy Jeppi Azzaro, Chairperson

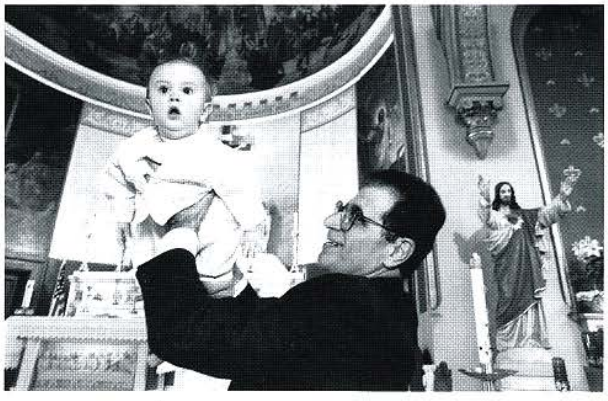
Angelo and Anthony Azzaro



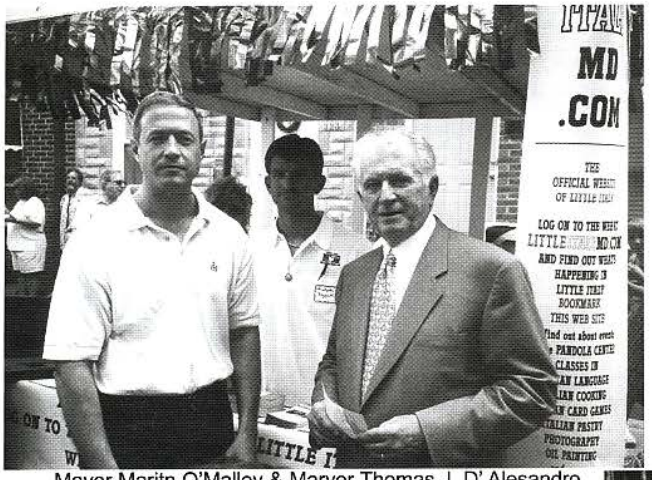
Nancy Azzaro



Gus Giorgilli



Pompa Baptism



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Heather Coulson & Christopher Mazzulli

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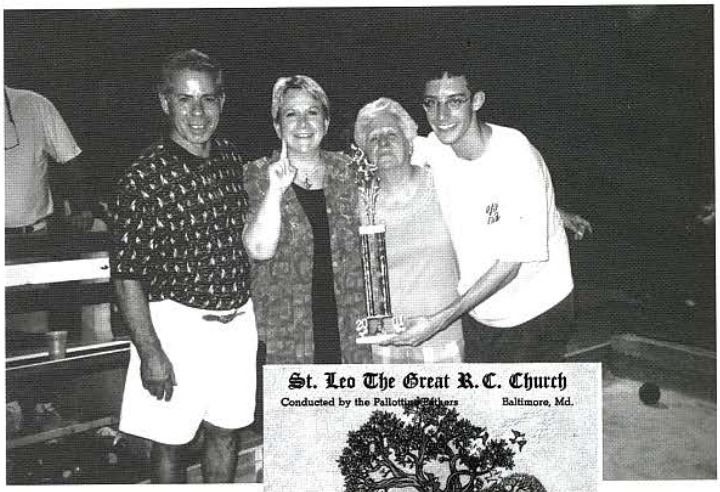

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Assistant
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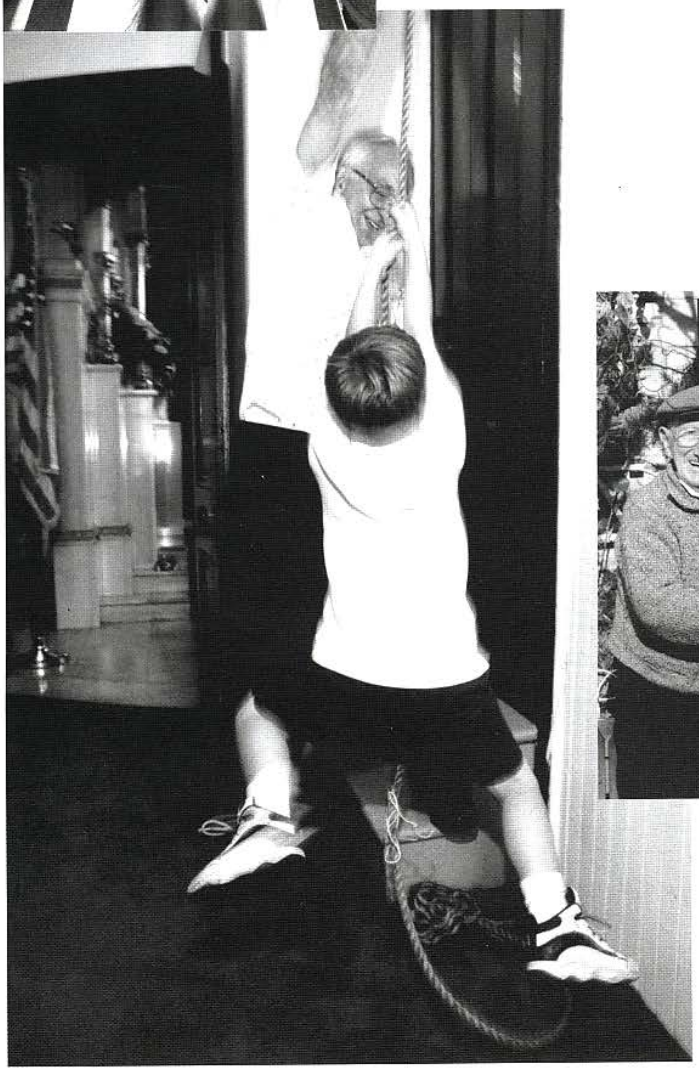
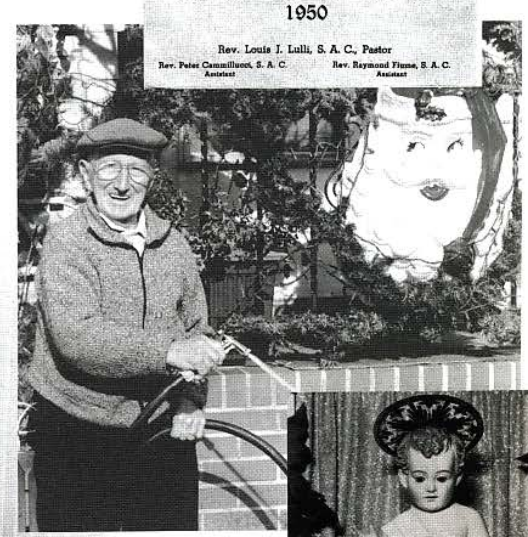
Assistant





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The Crest of Saint Leo

Saint Leo the Great was Pope from 440 to 461 during the time of the invasion of Attila the Hun. When Attila marched on Rome, Leo went out, with a multitude of priests and many crosses, to meet him and pleaded for him to leave. As Leo spoke, Attila saw the vision of the apostles Peter and Paul, clad like bishops, standing by Leo, the one on the right hand, the other on the left. They held swords stretched out over his head, and threatened Attila with death if he did not obey the pope's command.

Saint Leo is also know as the first doctor of the Church. This was because he was a writer of great learning and sanctity who wrote letters and sermons encouraging and teaching his flock, many of which survive today.

The design of the crest is based on the above facts about Saint Leo the Great. The over all shape is that of the pontiff's teria (hat). Saint Peter's keys were added, since Leo had a great devotion to the first pope. The sword is that of Saint Paul.

The colors in the crest were picked for what they have been known to represent.

Purple is known as a "royal" color because, way back in the middle ages, purple dye was the most expensive to make. Therefore, they only used it on the robes of royalty and priests, popes, and such, because they were the only ones who could afford it.

Yellow/Gold is the color associated with hope, vitality, communication, and optimism.

Red is the color of fire, of great fervor and zeal, of victory and triumph.

Black is the color of power, intelligence, sophistication, and death.

These four colors and what they represent embody whom and what Pope Saint Leo the Great was all about.

Christopher Mazzulli